

**LECTURERS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE VALUE OF THE EXPERIENCE OF  
COMPLETING A TEACHING PORTFOLIO**

by

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## DECLARATION

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I, **Elaine Lydia Grace**, declare that **LECTURERS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE VALUE OF THE EXPERIENCE OF COMPLETING A TEACHING PORTFOLIO** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the thesis/dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have had the dissertation edited by a professional editor and have proof of the certificate which was provided on completion.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at UNISA for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.



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## SUMMARY

A teaching portfolio allows lecturers to track their own growth and development in teaching and learning, as it helps to document their career's journey. This study gained insight into this experience from the lecturers' perspectives.

The research paradigm was qualitative and the study used a sample of lecturers from an independent tertiary institution in Johannesburg. Personal interviews provided rich data and themes were developed from the data to answer the research questions concerning the value of doing a teaching portfolio.

Lecturers' perceptions provided clear evidence of the value of doing a teaching portfolio, because it developed their personal competence, knowledge, skills and higher-order thinking. However, the findings showed that the success of a teaching portfolio remained dependent on individual motivation and how the process was implemented. Any challenges experienced tended to negatively affect motivation, thereby decreasing the perceived value of a teaching portfolio. This study recommended that a teaching portfolio might offer a solution to some of the current education issues within the South Africa context, especially with regard to the lack of content knowledge and the disempowerment of teachers.

### **Key terms:**

Teaching portfolio; andragogy; teaching and learning; reflection; critical review; metacognition; self-actualisation; best potential; intuition and constructivism.

## OPSOMMING

'n Onderrigportefeulje maak dit vir dosente moontlik om hul eie groei en ontwikkeling ten opsigte van onderrig en leer te monitor, omdat dit hulle help om hul loopbaan te dokumenteer. Hierdie studie gee insig in hierdie ervaring vanuit dosente se oogpunt.

Die navorsingsparadigma was kwalitatief en die studie het 'n steekproef van dosente van 'n onafhanklike tersiêre instelling in Johannesburg behels. Persoonlike onderhoude het ryk data opgelewer en temas is op grond van die data ontwikkel om die navorsingsvrae oor die waarde van 'n onderrigportefeulje te beantwoord.

Dosente se persepsies was 'n duidelike bewys van die waarde van 'n onderrigportefeulje, omdat dit hul persoonlike bevoegdheid, kennis, vaardighede en hoërorde-denke ontwikkel. Die bevindinge het egter getoon dat die sukses van 'n onderrigportefeulje steeds onderhewig is aan individuele motivering en hoe die proses geïmplementeer is. Enige uitdagings was geneig om 'n negatiewe invloed op motivering te hê en sodoende die vermeende waarde van 'n onderrigportefeulje te verlaag. Hierdie studie beveel aan dat 'n onderrigportefeulje 'n oplossing kan bied vir sommige van die opvoedingskwessies in die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks, veral met betrekking tot die gebrek aan inhoudkennis en die ontneming van onderwysers se mag.

### **Sleutelterme:**

Onderrigportefeulje; andragogie; onderrig en leer; besinning; kritiese oorsig; metakognisie; self-verwesenliking; beste potensiaal; intuïsie en konstruktivisme.

## KAKARETŠO

Photefolio ya go ruta e kgontša bafahloši go latišiša kgolo le tšwetšopele tše e lego tša bona ka go goruta le go ithuta, ka ge e thuša go rekhota leeto la mošomo wa bona. Thutelo ye e hweditše tshedimošo maitemogelong a go tšwa tebelelong ya bafahloši.

Dikgopolo ka ga nyakišišo e bile tša go hwetša tshedimošo ka go kwešiša le go lemoga mabaka a bothata gomme thutelo ye e dirišitše sampolo ya bafahloši go tšwa institušeneng ye e ikemetšeng ya morago ga marematlou go la Johannesburg. Ditherišano tša motho ka botee di tšweleditše datha ye bohlokwa gomme merero e hlagišitšwe go tšwa datheng go fa karabo ya dipotšišo tša dinyakišišo tše di lebanego bohlokwa bja go dira photefolio ya go ruta.

Dikgopolo tša bafahloši di file bohlatse bjo bo kwešišegago bja bohlokwa bja go dira photefolio ya go ruta, ka gobane e godišitše, botsebi, tsebo, mabokgoni tša bona le mokgwa wa go nagana wa maemo a godimo. Le ge go le bjalo, dikhwetšo di bontšhitše gore katlego ya photefolio ya go ruta e dutše e ithekgile go tutuetšo ya motho le ka moo tshepedišo e phethagaditšwego. Ditlhohlo dife goba dife tše di itemogetšwego di bile le go huetša tutuetšo, ka gorealo tša fokotša boleng bjo bo lebeletšwego bja photefolio ya go ruta. Thutelo ye e šišintše gore photefolio ya go ruta e ka fa tharollo go tše dingwe tša ditlhagišo tša bjale tša thuto kemong ya Afrika Borwa, gagolo malebana le tlhokego ya dintlhatsebo, dikgopolo le melaotshepetšo tše di rutwago le go ithuta ka tšona gammogo le go se be le maatla ga barutiši.

### **Mareo a bohlokwa:**

Photefolio ya go ruta, thuto ya batho ba bagolo; go ruta le go ithuta; tebeledišišo; tekolo ka go swaya diphošo; temogo le kwešišo tša ditshepedišo tša monagano wa gago; tiragatšo ya ditalente le bokgoni tša motho; bokgoni bjo fetišišago; tsebo ka tlhago le tlhamo ya tsebo le ditlhalošo go tšwa maitemogelong

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# CHAPTER 1

## CONTEXUALISATION AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

“All people can learn and all people will learn” (Biech, 2015:246) this is a bold statement. Biech (2015:246) claims that people will and do learn, no matter what and that this learning is as “natural as rest and play.” If lecturers are learners as well as teachers and they have access to a tool that could structure their learning, then it might be worth investigating how a tool, such as a teaching portfolio, would assist in making learning a natural part of everyday teaching and learning and it is important to investigate the value of this tool.

There is a dearth of research regarding the importance of the professional development of teachers, specifically in the South African context. However, there is a move towards developing a set of teaching principles (Joint Education Trust, 2017) which will assist in finding solutions to these shortcomings. It aims to reduce the many constraints within the current educational system around the discussion of teachers’ lack of content knowledge and the problem of teachers’ disempowerment (Taylor, 2008:11 & 24). The reason for this change and for the National Development Plan 2030, Our Future – make it work, Executive summary (National Development Plan, 2017) for education is to strengthen the calibre of <sup>1</sup>teachers.

Lecturers are exposed to teaching on a daily basis and this raises many questions concerning their own learning, especially in this fast-developing, ever-changing, modern society in which they teach. Questions that immediately come to mind are: What about the management and planning of lecturers’ learning? Does this process happen naturally or not? Is there an articulation and documentation of lecturers’ teaching philosophy, which is shown by a tangible product of their educational journey through a lifetime? What is it that they should learn and when? Who should decide what they should learn? If lecturers need to acquire knowledge on an ongoing basis, then it is important to consider the concept of adult learning in more detail, as this impacts on teaching and learning as well.

Adult learning is documented as andragogy, which is the practice, method and techniques of teaching adults. It is a term which has been used across time referring to “man leading” as opposed to pedagogy which means “child leading” (Pappas, 2013:n.p.). All learning, whether for child or adult,

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<sup>1</sup> In the context of this research project, the terms teacher and lecturer are used synonymously, because they refer to similar roles, albeit in different educational contexts. See section 1.9 for a more detailed explanation of the terminology used.

should do one thing and that is project a learner forward. There must be growth and development, progressing the learner towards independence and self-direction and because of this, the learner needs to acquire the learning for themselves, no matter the age of the learner. At the foreground of the framework of adult learning is the acknowledgement that self-actualisation is of prime importance, so this forms a fundamental objective in adult learning (Pappas, 2013:n.p.). Similarly, this objective of andragogy is linked to Maslow's concept of self-actualisation. This well-known theory suggests that self-actualisation is the highest human need, which is desired for both maximum potential and growth (McLeod, 2014:n.p.). Achieving this andragogy, will empower lecturers and teachers and it will reduce, if not remove, some of the constraints that are currently being experienced in the teaching field.

D'Souza and Gurin (2016:1) state that Maslow popularised the concept of self-actualisation as a process that some individuals go through during the journey of their life. It is referred to as "growth motivation" (D'Souza & Gurin, 2016:1) because it is believed that most mentally healthy individuals experienced it as they strove for self-actualisation as well as realised their true potential while they grew and became older. The result of this process was that individuals who succeeded, experienced fulfilment as they became more selfless and experienced less self-interest. In addition, they also tended to dedicate themselves to outside causes, which benefitted society as a whole. These people tended to experience feelings of "solidarity, compassion, care, problem solving and altruism" (D'Souza & Gurin, 2016:1). As more individuals self-actualise in a society, this increasingly benefits the whole of society, and allows it to flourish (D'Souza & Gurin, 2016:4). The teaching profession in all its forms, including lecturers at tertiary level, would do well to function at this level of self-actualisation, because this is exactly what is needed in the South African educational system.

In creating an understanding of adult learning, it is important to look deeper into how the mind functions during the learning process. This leads to a focus on the psychology of adult learning, which is examining the thinking behind adults' attitudes, their motivation as well as the quality of adults' learning (Waite, 2012:581). An integrated framework of andragogy, self-actualisation and the psychology enriches this understanding of adult learning, which means that adults must be partners in their own learning process. Experiential learning therefore plays a critical role in making problem-based learning far more important than content-based learning for adults (Pappas, 2013:n.p.).

One of the assumptions underpinning adult learning is that learning is self-directed. With exposure to learning on an ongoing basis, an adult accumulates a growing reservoir of experiences that become a resource for further learning. This learning also leads an adult to develop an orientation towards social roles (which in this context is his/her career as a lecturer). As an adult matures, so this new knowledge is immediately used in a field and the motivation to learn becomes increasingly internalised (Pappas, 2013:n.p.).



Adult teaching and learning are both complex processes, and the success thereof is undoubtedly based on a number of varied experiences and actions. The result of the act of both teaching and learning are dependent and proportionate to the knowledge, understanding and the skills available to the teacher as well as the learner at the time the learning takes place. With the development of psychology during the seventies, researchers such as Shulman (1978:9) documented their views, which created a fundamental, ground-breaking understanding of the learning process, which refers to the development of lecturers/teachers' knowledge and skills. According Shulman (1978:9), teaching is an "age-old profession", but teachers, like most professionals, begin their careers with formal tertiary training. It is at this time that andragogy becomes most relevant.

"Teaching is essentially a learnt profession, a teacher needs to understand what the important ideas are; how new ideas are added; and, how deficient ones are dropped to acquire new knowledge" (Shulman, 1978:9). Content knowledge and depth of understanding are essential, but both must result in a new understanding of teaching (Shulman, 1978:11). Teaching is a process of reasoning and action, which comprises "comprehension, transformation, instruction, evaluation, reflection and ultimately new comprehension" (Shulman, 1978:15). New comprehension is the result of a growth process, which leads to the construction of new knowledge. This process is the basis of a theory known as constructivism. Constructivist theory attempts to explain "how people come to know what they know" and they advocate that this learning takes place through a process in which "knowledge is built on a foundation of prior knowledge", so results from experiences and ideas that already exist (Krahenbuhl, 2016:97). If this reasoning and action can be structured in the form of a teaching portfolio, then this could assist teachers or lecturers to move towards new knowledge, excellence and even possibly self-actualisation. But for self-actualisation to happen, it assumes that this growth process would be sufficiently internally rewarding.

If the notion that andragogy is an important aspect to consider in adult learning, then Pappas (2013:n.p.) states that it is "important to interrogate the what, where, why and the how of one's own learning as well as teaching in order to analyse and understand the whole process." This "awareness of one's own thought process" (Gharial, Saini & Vig, 2017:260) is known as metacognition. When this analysis of one's own thinking and learning is coupled with a self-development process, then the thinking becomes a conscious, dynamic and an ongoing process. Lecturers who have the opportunity to engage in professional learning ought to be more reflexive about their own teaching practices and be familiar with developing portfolios of learning that embody the principles envisaged by Knowles (Pappas, 2013:n.p.), and even the foundational thinking of Shulman (1978:9) as discussed previously. In order for these aspects and principles to be considered, there are a number of factors that need to be taken into consideration during this process: "reflection" (Grift and Major, 2013:15); "critical review" (Blumberg, 2014:54); "inquiry" (Earl & Timperley, 2008:4); "metacognition" (Gharial et al. 2017:260) and, the very nature of developing a teaching portfolio, itself.

A teaching portfolio contains material that is informative about one's teaching and learning. It should aptly represent one's teaching, including all the errors, the emphasis should be on the learning and not on the teaching (Meeus, van Petegem & Engels, 2009:407). In this research study one of the aims is to find out how lecturers perceived and experienced the value of completing a teaching portfolio. Other aims of this study are to find out: whether this process conforms to andragogy; whether a teaching portfolio is a valuable tool in teaching and learning; as well as whether a teaching portfolio could be part of a lifelong, ongoing and structured learning experience.

By understanding the nature of a teaching portfolio, one will be able to determine whether there is merit or not in completing it. These affordances will inform the background understanding and theoretical perspective, which is the focus of Chapter 2. It is also of interest to understand the growth and development that takes place in teaching competence as well as in higher-order cognitive development and metacognition, all of which promise to result from the process of doing a teaching portfolio. However, the true value of this research regarding teaching portfolios will be shown when the qualitative data is presented. This will highlight the lecturers' opinions, findings and experiences, which are based on personally completing a teaching portfolio, in an authentic teaching and learning environment.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE FOR THIS RESEARCH**

### **1.2.1 Initial Awareness**

The teaching portfolio became a topic of interest to me, as I lectured students studying a Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree at a tertiary institution. A development plan, including a teaching portfolio and peer review process, is part of the performance appraisal system for lecturers of that particular institution. The teaching portfolio documents one's career, and highlights strengths and successes as well as areas of weakness and potential growth, it also provides a personalised growth plan. This process, by its nature, requires a significant degree of reflection.

The first year of completing my own personal individualised teaching portfolio was a mammoth task. But during the second and subsequent years, the process became more focused on the development part of the process, therefore it became more meaningful. The teaching portfolio documented my teaching style, personal goals, growth and development. It also recorded the students' achievement, in the form of pass and distinction rates. The doing of a portfolio became part of my teaching style: it was informative, and provided a structure, space and time to reflect and measure successes; it also helped identify areas that needed growth and development in my planning, training and lecturing.

One of the requirements at the tertiary institution was that I coordinated the BEd degree. This meant that I planned and organised the preparation as well as the practical teaching experiences for preservice/student teachers across the four years of the degree. As I increasingly understood the value of a personal teaching portfolio, I introduced it to fourth year B Ed students. The teaching portfolio acted as a form of andragogy and it was intended to document the preservice teachers' personalised learning and development plans. Another aim was to encourage them to be lifelong learners. It was also an opportunity to ensure that the student teachers were prepared for their first job interview, where they could present themselves in manner that was a cut above other job seekers. I observed that the completion of a personal portfolio seemed to instil confidence. By reflecting, documenting and emphasising what the preservice teachers did know as opposed to dwelling on what they did not know, it helped to motivate them. This motivation was often shown by some of the student teachers' plans to pursue further studies at honours level. The resulting metacognitive and psychological value of this reflective practice became of increasing interest, and prompted this research.

Reflection is seen as a vital component of quality teaching (Canada-Philips, 2014:635), as reflection involves a process of critical self-examination of one's teaching decisions. It is also designed to promote learning and help the teacher to become more aware of the impact of their instruction on the learners' learning (Eggen, 2013:12; Sandford & Strong-Wilson, 2014:15). This reflection applied to my own lecturing as well as the training and teaching of the preservice teachers concerned. As they were introduced to a teaching portfolio and its advantages, they appeared to begin to strategise, reflect and plan better, by being offered a tool and a strategy, they were able to take ownership and responsibility for their own personal development as teachers and lifelong learners. Grift and Major (2013:15) confirm this view, because they believe that a teacher's learning process encourages thinking, planning, acting as well as reflecting. The preservice teachers increasingly became aware of the personal gaps in their knowledge and skills and planned how to grow and develop competency in these areas. This was both an invaluable career lesson as well as a life lesson for these young adults. What in fact was offered to them in the strategy of using the tool of a teaching portfolio, was andragogy in action and the chance to grow and develop themselves in a useful and constructive way.

The thought occurred to me that this process was metacognition in action. If these students were experiencing a form of andragogy, then there was a possibility that this might result in self-actualisation. I wondered whether this could become a lifelong process that would impact positively on their teaching and learning. The result was that I knew that it would be informative to document the value of completing a teaching portfolio according to lecturers' perceptions from a group already experienced in using a teaching portfolio. In teaching my students, I was inspired to understand the true value of a teaching portfolio, and this became the reason for this research.

### **1.2.2 Exploration of the Problem**

Given the evidence that the South African educational system is reported to be in crisis (Joint Education Trust, 2017:2), the assumption is that there are weaknesses at every level of the system, namely, the classroom, school and administrative structure, which all contribute to the crisis in schooling. There are a number of undertakings to find solutions, such as, the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, Vision for education (National Development Plan, 2017) and the Professional Teaching Standards (PTS) (Joint Education Trust, 2017:3) to address these issues. Professionalism in teaching needs to be upheld and research can assist in enabling teachers, researchers and policy makers to be stakeholders in this ongoing process. This applies across the range of teachers from pre-primary teachers to tertiary level lecturers too. There needs to be a competent body of teachers and lecturers developed who prepare young children and youth for life in the 21st century. The question this raises is could a teaching portfolio assist with this process?

One of the aspects that this research aims to focus on is whether a teaching portfolio is a useful tool to develop teachers' skills, so that it promotes greater success in teaching and learning. But how do teachers develop best practice? To explore this question, it is necessary to consider whether a teaching portfolio acts as a suitable gauge of what it means to be a successful teacher. Next, to examine critically the value of doing a portfolio so that any constraints are identified. These considerations provide a premise, which helps to interrogate whether or not teaching portfolios may be effective in developing best practice. This raises the following question: what is a teaching portfolio?

According to Ingle and Duckworth (2013:57), research assists in understanding what a teaching portfolio is: it documents a career and allows a person to demonstrate the product of their educational journey. Reflection on practice is not only a positive strategy for any teacher, but it also allows for the documentation of knowledge, experience and ability in a teacher education programme (Sandford & Strong-Wilson, 2014:15). This would align this research project with the NDP's 2030 vision (NDP, 2017) of building capacity within the teaching profession, because a teaching portfolio might be an important tool to highlight the vulnerabilities and strengths of the incumbents who develop portfolios. However, there are many layers that need to be unpacked regarding how such portfolios are implemented and standardised. It needs to be demonstrated whether or not the articulation of practice and teaching philosophies are essential to developing good teachers who are able to reflect on their practice.

Talbert (1998:20) provides views on teaching portfolios that shows great insight and they also provide foundational thinking with regard to its use in the workplace. She believes that the goal of a portfolio is the understanding of practice, its articulation and documentation of a philosophy of

practice, but with the intention of improving it. Talburt (1998:24) sees a portfolio as a type of action research that is “collective, collaborative, self-reflective, critical and undertaken for inquiry”. A teaching portfolio appears to add value to the teaching and learning experience, because as the teacher grows and develops, it also affects the learners, learning and the learning environment. Furthermore, a portfolio is compared to the latest information on thinking, which Talburt (1998:26) believed as Foucault did, is the “work of an intellectual: to disturb people’s mental habits, the way they do and think things, to dissipate what is familiar and accepted, then to re-examine them.” Talburt (1998:22) explains that this re-examination must and will create a deeper understanding, so his views are valuable to this study. The process of doing a portfolio requires many metacognitive skills, which is what adds value to this process, and it allows for a deeper understanding of both teaching and learning to develop.

Today, more modern views reiterate the same ideas. An example in Dana (2013:82-83) sees portfolios as a type of action research, which is cyclical, continuous and ongoing throughout a lecturer’s professional lifetime. This searching for answers and deeper understanding is a continual and relentless process. It raises questions which result in the searching for answers that will help to improve practice. This growth process is a powerful source of knowledge for the lecturer. When striving for excellence on an ongoing basis, the engaged lecturer will be a lifelong learner, who is an active participant in the learning process. This means showing the following traits: creativity; critical and strategic thinking; cooperative in group work, leadership and responsibility; and, who engages in their own learning at a deep level (Leone, 2013:11). Additionally, these self-directed learners exemplify innovativeness and independence (Botha, 2014:27).

A lecturer, who participates in this kind of quality learning across a lifetime, will inevitably exhibit strategies like those identified by Leone (2013:41):

- Brainstorming
- Enhanced problem solving ability
- Collaborative and cooperative learning
- Reflection activities
- Ongoing learning through application
- Self-learning

These ideas are also shown when doing a teaching portfolio, which requires the same skills which teachers use in the course of successful teaching on a daily basis. According to Ingle and Duckworth (2013:57), these strategies are reflection, initiation and the setting of one’s own goals by personal motivation, which form part of a Personal Learning Environment (PLE). Teaching portfolios exemplify an engaged teacher who encompasses best practice and self-reflection.

It seems that the teaching portfolio qualifies as a good example of andragogy, because it occurs across the space of Life Long Learning (LLL) and it may form part of a PLE. The principles of good andragogy require the following: that adults must be partners in their own educational plans; that they learn experientially, based on positive and negative experiences; that the material being learnt must be relevant; and, that problem-based learning is more effective than content-based learning. All of these strategies represent good, self-directed adult learning, as well as encompassing learning as an ongoing and complex process. This also means that the journey of learning is owned by the person who participates in the process. Portfolios are good examples of the type of andragogy described above and are used successfully and effectively in teacher education programmes. Furthermore, portfolios challenge and disturb mental habits and create a continuous spiral of inquiry, which is a valuable benefit for teaching and learning. In the light of this understanding, it raises the following question: what is the nature and the value of doing a teaching portfolio? To answer this question, it seemed best to ask those who have done a teaching portfolio and to enquire how they have perceived their experience, which is the focus of this research.

With regard to past research, the result of doing a portfolio is typically seen as leading to a deeper understanding of teaching, therefore it includes the knowledge gained from the process. This view is supported by the foundational research based on the thinking of Piaget and Vygotsky, which is investigated in Chapter 2, where portfolios are interrogated with respect to how they help to construct teachers' knowledge and skills. The portfolio adds further value across a lifetime, as it is used in a dynamic and ongoing process. Value refers to the importance or usefulness of something, the worth or the standard of the behaviour (Waite, 2012:816).

The idea of knowledge being constructed (Xyst, 2016:11) allows an understanding of how a person comes to know what they currently know, and it is also known as the theory of knowing. It appears to be a window into deeper questions about the composition of any learners' knowledge. Xyst (2016:11) also refers to Bredo's interpretation of constructivism as knowledge being made, not found, and that making implies choice, creation and decisions. The person constructing the knowledge (the learner), therefore has an interactive role in the process of acquiring the knowledge. This way of acquiring knowledge creates a pattern and it requires deep thinking to be successful. The thinking about thinking (metacognition) can be traced within this study to understand portfolios (the learner includes the reader and the writer) as well as within the portfolio itself to develop teaching competency (by the lecturer). This idea refers to metacognition, which underpins the conceptual framework of this study at every level.

Flavell (1979:n.p) referred to metacognition as the act of thinking about one's own thought processes to enhance learning. Recently, metacognition is seen as an awareness of one's own thought process and, more specifically, the ability to regulate one's own cognitive processes in learning (Railean, Elci

& Elci, 2017:26). Metacognition promotes critical and creative thinking, which results in a variety of options and solutions to problems. This process generates better judgements and decision making that allows for self-regulation of thought. Metacognition is not only used to regulate thoughts, but it also enables mindful and productive thought, which encourages thinking out of the box (Railean et al. 2017:22). It is therefore vital for success in dealing with one's academics, career and life challenges. This regulation of thought, required in metacognition, allows a person constantly to plan, monitor and evaluate his/her thought processes and so a prerequisite is higher-order-thinking skills (Railean et al. 2017:24). Development of metacognition depends on human maturation, so an individual who is more mature will tend to have better metacognition when compared to a younger, less experienced individual (Railean et al. 2017:26). During this study, this process is shown as well as within a teaching portfolio. This study is metacognitive, because it is both investigating and guiding the thinking about a tool, namely, a teaching portfolio. In itself, this provides a metacognitive process, which assists with thinking about thinking regarding the details, effectiveness and development of a person's teaching or lecturing.

Taking a metacognitive approach means that teachers themselves become learners who must do the following: "take control of their learning; accept responsibility for their growth and development; define their goals and monitor their progress, in this way they they acquire new skills and knowledge in an active way. Through ongoing evaluation they need to determine what did and did not work well for them" (Corbett, n.d.:1). In section 2.3.6 of this study, metacognition is interrogated to develop a deeper understanding of this concept. Constructivism is used as the underlying theoretical framework which conceptualise this study, because it underpins the step-by-step process of building knowledge. By adopting this approach, it helps to determine the type of questions that will be asked and answered about teaching portfolios, which will help to advance our understanding of teaching portfolios (de Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2014:35).

In summary, lecturing and teaching are learnt skills, which require new understanding and comprehension if lecturers and teachers are to move forward towards excellence (Shulman, 1978:9-15). If this move to excellence happens, then it will strengthen the teachers' calibre, reduce many of the constraints in the educational system (NDP, 2017) and empower teachers (Taylor, 2008:11 & 24).

Andragogy requires that a person willingly takes control of their learning in a self-directed way, although they may or may not need to use others' input in their learning experience. The resultant growth is anchored in the profound psychological aspiration of adult learners to be seen and treated by others as people skilled in personal autonomy (Botha, 2014:26). Personal autonomy is a complex notion that requires continuous learning to move towards the kind of excellence already mentioned by Shulman (1978:15). This learning takes place in many different situations and will impact on

personal development, which means that it forms part of the the journey that is documented and recorded in a teaching portfolio.

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

If professional development in the teaching profession is seen as a move towards excellence, then completing a teaching portfolio appears to be an ideal tool to assist in developing teachers and it can assist in strengthening the calibre of teachers in South Africa (NDP, 2017). A teaching portfolio will also help with self-actualisation, which is seen as the prime objective of adult learning (Pappas, 2013:n.p.), as well as a human need which is desired for maximum potential and growth (McLeod, 2014:n.p.). The reason for this is that a teaching portfolio documents a career and allows people to demonstrate the process as well as evidence of their development, their educational journey, their self-actualisation and ultimately their move towards excellence (Ingle, 2013:57).

A teaching portfolio, used as a form of andragogy, is a valuable tool to inform a lifelong and structured learning experience. As a teaching portfolio hones intuitive knowledge and develops reflective practice, it should form part of professional teacher training (Mickleborough, 2015:889). This idea is similar to “reflection-in-action”, which is gained from experience and was emphasised in the eighties by Schön (1983:1). It can be viewed as an ethic of everyday practice and a vision for professionals (Ravitch, 2014:7), where society as a whole will recoup the benefits of teachers compiling a teaching portfolio, because teachers and learners will flourish as a result of this practice (D’Souza & Gurin, 2016:4).

Considering the literature reviewed for this section of the study, it shows that a teaching portfolio adds value to the teaching and learning experience, because it is an organised, goal-driven documentation that portrays both professional growth and competence (Campbell, Melenyzer & Nettles, 2014:3).

There is a need to investigate and discover what lecturers’ perceive and experience when they develop their own teaching portfolio, which is this study’s purpose. It is important to establish the following: whether a teaching portfolio makes a difference to the lecturers’ teaching and learning practice; whether they believe it adds value to their professional growth and performance; and, whether it impacts on the students that they teach on a daily basis. Thus, the main aim of this study to determine what the lecturers’ perceptions are of completing a teaching portfolio, and its effects on their practice.



## **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following research questions were formulated for the purpose of this study:

### **1.4.1 Primary Research Question**

The primary research question is: What are the lecturers' perceptions of the value of completing a teaching portfolio?

### **1.4.2 Secondary Research Questions**

The following are secondary research questions:

- In what way does the experience of completing a teaching portfolio influence the lecturers' thinking and behaviour in the lecture room?
- In what way does the experience of reflection result in self-directed and goal-directed growth?
- In what way does this impact on the lecturers/learners' quality of learning?
- In what way would self-directed growth become a lifelong tool in the experience of a personalised learning environment?

## **1.5 THE RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **1.5.1 The Aim of the Study**

The aim of this study was to investigate whether the experience of completing a teaching portfolio adds value or makes a difference with regards to a lecturers' perceived professional growth and improved performance.

### **1.5.2 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the current research, regarding the lecturers' experiences of completing a teaching portfolio, include the following:

- To explore the lecturers' perceptions of completing a teaching portfolio.
- To investigate the value of reflection in the process of completing a teaching portfolio.
- To determine whether the lecturers consider a teaching portfolio to be a valuable lifelong tool for professional growth and development.
- To determine whether lecturers perceive a teaching portfolio to have a positive impact on student learning.

## **1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN, PARADIGM AND METHODOLOGY**

A descriptive research project presents an accurate picture of the details of a teaching portfolio, and answers the how and why questions concerning the lecturers' perception of a teaching portfolio (de Vos et al. 2014:96). Descriptive methodology allows the researcher to report things 'the way they are'. It also provides rich data which is ideal for this study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:217). This descriptive methodology creates an understanding that helps to document and describe the phenomenon (Marshall & Rosman, 2016:78), which in this case is a particular perspective on a teaching portfolio.

The teaching portfolio was the phenomenon studied by the researcher, with the intention of establishing the lecturers' perceptions regarding their experiences of completing a teaching portfolio. These in-depth descriptions were obtained through a semi-structured interview, which formed the qualitative component of the study. The researcher used these semi-structured questions to obtain descriptions from eight lecturers. These interviews were conducted in order to answer the research questions, and the interviews were then transcribed and analysed (Maree, 2007:299).

### **1.6.1 Research Paradigm**

A paradigm is seen to be a model and design for collecting and interpreting the data (de Vos et al. 2014:40). In this study, the paradigm is qualitative, because it attempts to collect rich, descriptive data in order to gain an understanding from other people's points of view, meaning and experience with respect to a certain phenomenon or context. The intention is to develop an understanding of what is being studied (Maree, 2007:50). Knowledge is contextual, especially the experience of completing a teaching portfolio. A qualitative paradigm generates varied and useful information, which was shown by the personal responses of a small group of lecturers in this investigation (Braun & Clarke, 2013:33). Qualitative research is concerned with understanding and observing, in this case lecturers in a natural setting, a lecturing environment in a tertiary institution, as well as gathering various perspectives from an insider's point of view, namely, the lecturer's perspective on a teaching portfolio (de Vos et al. 2014:308). Maree (2007:52) re-affirms that a qualitative approach will help create an understanding, accounted for by the lecturers and described as it occurred in a natural occurring context (tertiary lecturing institution), and in this case it was the perspective of completing a teaching portfolio.

### **1.6.2 Research Approach**

The research approach is qualitative in nature. Qualitative research is about meaning, and the answers are subjective, personal and unique (Braun & Clarke, 2013:19). This approach requires

words rather than numbers and it had to continue until a deep understanding was achieved by the researcher (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:23). Qualitative research allows a unique strategy, which is best suited to the research, to evolve during the research process (de Vos et al. 2014:312). The investigation of lecturers' perceptions regarding the completing of a teaching portfolio discovered what they know as a result of the process. Individuals accounted for their subjective meanings, which were garnered from their different subjective contexts. This means that their answers reflected personal experience, while providing valuable, narrow but rich, detailed descriptions (Braun & Clarke, 2013:4).

### **1.6.3 Research Design**

This study considers the phenomenological design to be the one best suited for this research, and it uses hermeneutics because it provides a qualitative mode of inquiry. A phenomenological approach is ideal, because it helps to explore, describe and analyse the meaning of the participants' accounts of their individual, lived experiences: it provides the lecturers with an opportunity to report on how they perceive, describe, feel, judge, remember and make sense of their respective experience of completing a teaching portfolio (Marshall & Rossman, 2016:17). Hermeneutics also allows for a researcher to search for hidden or inferred meanings in the analysis of the data and in the answers to the research questions (Maree, 2007:101).

### **1.6.4 Research Strategy**

In this qualitative research, a typical semi-structured interview is an ideal research strategy, because it allows the researcher to initiate the interview, then through the dynamics of a storyline, the researcher develops an increasingly complex understanding of the perspective of, in this case the lecturer's understanding of a teaching portfolio (de Vos et al. 2014:347). Hermeneutics normally encompasses the use of in-depth interviews, which are based on a particular subject. This is where individuals who have experienced the phenomenon of interest share their views. In this case, the individuals were lecturers who had previously completed a teaching portfolio. Each lecturer will express their perception as a unique response to the interview questions and portray life as they have experienced and lived it with regards completing a teaching portfolio (Marshall & Rossman, 2016:118). De Vos et al. (2014:348) refers to a qualitative approach as one that allows for flexibility as well as depth in the discussion of the topic, this is ideal for this particular research study.

Braun and Clarke (2013:24) see qualitative discovery as experiential and being driven by the desire to know people's perspective and meaning. This means that this approach is similar to trying to get inside the participants' heads and gathering a rich and deeper understanding of their experience. Lecturers reported on their personal experience of completing a teaching portfolio, and they provided

their personal views on the teaching portfolio's value. De Vos considers this to be gathering information from a primary and original source, as the person being interviewed is accounting for his/her personal experience (de Vos et al. 2014:377).

Another way of looking at the approach of doing a teaching portfolio is as an inquiry cycle, seen as a process which is dynamic, systematic and continuous, it studies, explores, raises questions, and improves lecturing practice, for the duration of a career, if one is committed to doing it. This inquiry cycle becomes a powerful force that results in greater and increasing knowledge of oneself and one's teaching (Dana, 2013:82-83). For lecturers, the doing of a teaching portfolio results in a process of growth and development. During this study, the inquiry created a clearer understanding of the value of a teaching portfolio.

### **1.6.5 Research Procedure**

#### *1.6.5.1 Sample*

The sample is the participants in the research, and it includes where, how and when they will be selected (Maree, 2007:34). In qualitative research, the sample is less structured, because the data is collected by means of interviews. This method is detailed and time consuming, but it is also informal. It has less rules and the focus is rather on the purpose of the study. The sample size is determined by what the study is trying to find out (de Vos et al. 2014:391). In this study, the sample of the participants was conveniently selected and comprised of a small group of lecturers who were accessible to the researcher at the time of the study (Braun & Clarke, 2013:57). According to de Vos et al. (2014:232), a purposive sample is composed of elements most characteristic of the population that will serve the purpose of this study. In this study, the researcher's judgement determined these factors: the sample group needed to have completed a teaching portfolio as well as have had experience in lecturing. Purposive sampling assists in generating insights and an in-depth understanding of the topic: these lecturers were able to provide information-rich data based on their knowledge and experience relating to this research topic (Braun & Clarke, 2013:57). The research site where the research was conducted was at a tertiary institution in Johannesburg (Maree, 2007:34).

In summary, therefore, the purposive-convenient sample was representative of available lecturers, who were known to the researcher as experienced in lecturing. They also had previously completed a teaching portfolio (Braun & Clark, 2013:57).

#### 1.6.5.2 *Data collection: Interviews*

The intention of phenomenological interviewing is to allow the views of various people, in this case lecturers, to describe their perception of a teaching portfolio, each lecturer will report on their experience in different ways which will account for the uniqueness of their personal perception (Marshall & Rossman, 2016:153). De Vos et al. (2014:348) see this sharing as an extension of a formalised conversation, but with the purpose of getting answers to questions which will help the researcher to understand the meaning the individual gave to an experience. The researcher decided on face-to-face, semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection tool. Semi-structured interviews are often used in qualitative research, because they are conducted in a dynamic, flexible and relaxed way, which allows for mutual interaction. These interviews also provide the participants with time to reflect on their experiences. Questions will be open-ended and the interview schedule guides the process and allows for in depth and detailed responses (Addendum H).

Meaning is enhanced by the researcher encouraging the participants to elaborate and clarify the data as it is collected during the discussion (Braun & Clarke, 2013:78). Maree (2007:87) claims that interviews provide insight and focus mainly on the participants' perceptions of the event or topic, which is ideal for the purpose of this study. The researcher was engaged during the interview, trying to understand the lecturers' responses in their context, and allowed for any points of interest to unfold according to the respective lecturers' perspective (de Vos et al. 2014:348). Any additional notes were made at the time of the interview, and the interviews were recorded then transcribed at a later date.

#### 1.6.5.3 *Data collection: Document analysis*

For the purpose of this study, the guidelines for a teaching portfolio were requested from the Teaching and Learning Manager of the tertiary institution in Johannesburg. These guidelines provided further insight into the suggested content and the process of completing a typical teaching portfolio that the lecturers had been part of before they were interviewed. This allowed the researcher to reflect on how these components compared to that discovered in the research findings in Chapter 2 concerning the nature of teaching portfolios as well as the perception of the lecturers with regards the value of a teaching portfolio. It also provided a context and background against which the lecturers' comments and perceptions during the individual interviews concerning a teaching portfolio should be understood.

#### 1.6.5.4 *Data analysis*

A thematic approach looks for patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2013:174). In this research, a thematic approach assists in identifying any patterns in the lecturers' different accounts of their experiences

in the process of completing a teaching portfolio. The research questions help to structure the data into themes that provide an understanding of the value of a teaching portfolio.

Data was recorded in a systematic way that was appropriate to a real-life setting (de Vos et al. 2014:404), namely, a tertiary education environment. The template for the interview schedule acted as a guideline when transcribing the recorded interviews. This helped to maintain areas of interest or themes (de Vos et al. 2014:404). The phenomenological context entails exploring an experience and people's meaning, and to support of this approach, the data was collected qualitatively. This method of analysing the data also strives to ensure that it provides an accurate account as possible of the participants' views of their experience.

The data is then coded and analysed anonymously: the responses are categorised according to themes to answer the specific research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2013:141). In the next stage, the meaning, understanding and interpretation of the data becomes important. During the data analysis process, the researcher collects, notices and thinks about the data, which is a cyclical, interlinked and ongoing process (Maree, 2007:100).

As a phenomenological study, the lecturers' views of their experiences, subjective understandings and perceptions is an ideal method of data collection (Braun & Clarke, 2013:50). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) helps to analyse the data, because it explores the meaning of the responses and goes beyond the obvious to a deeper, inferential level of understanding (Braun & Clarke, 2013:174). Reflections on the analysis provide opportunities for the researcher to make connections between pieces of data, ideas and thoughts that arise, which are based on the data (de Vos et al. 2014:406).

Individual differences and details are maintained when using the IPA analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013:237). Through the process of categorising the data, the patterns became obvious and themes were created, which were essential for organising the concepts used to construct knowledge about the value of teaching portfolios (Braun & Clarke, 2013:223-224).

## **1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study focused on a small sample of lecturers from one particular branch of one specific institution; this limits the findings to this particular samples perception on the value of doing a teaching portfolio and its effect on their growth and development across time. Another limitation of this research was that it searched only for evidence of the value of a teaching portfolio with regard to the impact it had on enhancing the knowledge and skills of the lecturer as well as the impact it may have had on the student's learning. It may have had value in other ways for different individuals.

These findings may be used only as a basis for suggestions as to how to improve teaching and learning through the use of a specific tool, namely, a teaching portfolio, which encourages metacognitive processes for self-improvement. Any recommendations made are based on these limitations, so generalisations to a larger population of lecturers or teachers must keep these limits in mind.

## **1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethical clearance was granted by the University of South Africa (UNISA) (Ref:2017/10/184623010/32/MC) to do the research and the required stipulated code of ethics was adhered to throughout this research. Permission was granted by the tertiary institution to interview the participants and their conditions adhered to during the research process (Addendum E).

Research has to be of a high, ethical standard, and every effort was made to uphold high standards during this research. The researcher showed respect for the lecturers by ensuring that their rights were upheld and emphasised the lecturers' freedom of choice to participate in this research. Their privacy, as well as their anonymity, were guaranteed at all times. It was also the researcher's intention that no participants would experience any harm as a result of participating in this study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016:51 & 52). Information was supplied at the beginning to the lecturers in the form of a written Information Brief (Addendum F). This brief clearly specified the following: that the research was a qualitative study; that the participants' commitment to the study was voluntary; that confidentiality was ensured, and their anonymity was guaranteed; and, that there was no payment for taking part in this study. Participant Consent Forms (Addendum G) were read and signed before an interview started (Marshall & Rossman, 2016:52).

### **1.8.1 Validity and Reliability**

Trustworthiness or the goodness of qualitative research is measured by the following criteria: reliability, validity, objectivity and generalisability (Marshall & Rossman, 2016:43). Every effort was made to ensure that the qualitative results reflected the participants' true opinions. The collated data reflected and reported on the participants' authentic account of their personal experiences while completing a teaching portfolio.

## **1.9 CLARIFICATION OF TERMINOLOGY**

The researcher considered it necessary to provide clarification for a number of key terms which appear throughout the study. This also helps to clarify the context within which the research took place.

### **1.9.1 Lecturer or Teacher**

This research concerns lecturers but for this research, the role is synonymous with that of teachers. Typically, the word teacher refers to someone who teaches or who causes someone to understand or learn, someone who gives information or shows someone how to do something (Waite, 2012:748). Leone (2013:1) sees teaching as giving somebody knowledge and skills. These definitions of a teacher describe a lecturer's role and responsibility as well. As a result, the three terms are used interchangeably throughout this research study.

### **1.9.2 Learner**

For the purposes of this study, the learner is described as follows: the person who receives the instruction or teaching; the person who is shown how to do something; the person who gains the knowledge and skill; or, the person whose concepts are being altered, changed or formed (Waite, 2012:412). This description also refers to a student if this person attends lectures in a tertiary learning environment. For the purposes of this study, the learner could mean the following: a student, a preservice teacher, an in-service teacher or a lecturer. This depends on whether someone assumes the role of a person who is gaining knowledge.

### **1.9.3 Learning**

There must be a change in concept formation, and this creates observable evidence that learning has occurred. Behaviourists believe that if learning occurs, then there will be a change in observable behaviour. In contrast, social cognitive theorists look for evidence of a change in mental processes that create the capacity to demonstrate different behaviours. Whether one's view is behavioural or cognitive or a combination of the two, change is expected if learning has occurred (Eggen, 2013:292). This change will be part of a mental growth process.



#### **1.9.4 Environment**

The environment is seen in a holistic context, where learning takes place. It involves a complex interplay of a variety of factors and conditions (Waite, 2012:237). All of these factors impact on the quality of the learning and the experience results in the success or failure of the learning.

#### **1.9.5 Psychology**

The thinking and the attitudes related to teaching and learning as well as the doing of a teaching portfolio is the psychology that underpins this research. Psychology is a scientific study of the human mind and its functions, and this definition includes the mental characteristics or a person's attitude (Waite, 2012:581). Educational psychology is an academic discipline that focusses on the studying of teaching and learning. It also emphasises the professional knowledge and skills essential for effective teaching (Eggen, 2013:6).

#### **1.9.6 Reflection**

Reflection is a learnt process which is ongoing. It consists of identifying a problem that causes dissonance. After critically reflecting on the problem, then a person acts to change and challenge the situation. It is an active process with conscious, structured, goal-orientated activities (Meeus et al. 2009:408). Reflection is a vital and useful component of quality education, and it is used to interrogate situations and problems. According to Canada-Phillips (2014:637), this process is perpetual, fluid and dynamic. It causes people, in this case lecturers, to grow and change through every moment of their existence as teachers. The value of reflection is a source of personal growth, and it develops internal schema that enrich a lifelong journey (Canada-Phillips, 2014:635). Reflection also forms a vital part of the process when doing a teaching portfolio.

#### **1.9.7 Constructivism**

Knowledge is created from within the person and by an individual: it stems from an individual's experiences and beliefs (Toraman & Demir, 2016:13). In this study, learning is seen from a constructivist approach, which is concerned with how we come to know what we know. Drawing on the work of both Piaget and Vygotsky, constructivists believe that knowledge and learning is constructed internally by the learner in the following ways: engaging with a subject; having concrete experiences; showing curiosity; discovering; and, even playing. This active involvement leads us to form our own ideas, which in turn results in discussion, sharing of ideas and thinking seriously and carefully about what we learn. The goal is to become a critical thinker who is proficient in a subject (Naude & Meyer, 2014:5).

Constructivism stresses the need for active learning through internal actions like recognising, analysing and comparing. This means using the known to understand the unknown. It also reveals the degree to which a person has grasped the different forms of thinking, which are essential to constructing knowledge. Learning is believed to take place through a process in which knowledge is built on a foundation of prior knowledge. Thus, learning results from experiences and ideas (Krahenbul, 2016:97). The evidence for the internal cognitive actions of learning are observable in a performance that reflects the internal actions, which means that a learner must be able to show what they have learnt and the degree to which they have learnt it. This requires individual learning and growth also known as the “zone of proximal development” as well as individual mediation, known as “scaffolding” for effective learning to occur (Naude & Meyer, 2014:6). It also means that an lecturer or teacher knows the potential of a student’s understanding, and this knowledge is acquired by interacting with a student. The ideas of the “zone of proximal development” and its required “scaffolding” or learning support are discussed in detail as part of Vygotsky’s theory as well as part of constructivism in Chapter 2, sections 2.5.4 of this study.

#### **1.9.8 Metacognition**

Metacognition is seen to be a sophisticated intellectual process, where people are aware of their own thinking, memory and language abilities. This assists with higher-order processes like problem solving and decision making, as well as showing an awareness of one’s own cognitive process (Watts, Cockcroft & Duncan, 2017:376). This “thinking about your thinking” (Flavel, 1979:n.p.) or “knowing about your knowing” (Chiaburu, Cho, Gardner, 2015:363) is a higher-order-thinking skill. Gharial, Sainin and Vig (2017:260) see metacognition as an awareness of one’s own thought process as well as the ability to regulate the cognitive processes in learning. Success in learning comes from being empowered, and this provides learners with the confidence to solve problems autonomously. As active participants, learners become motivated and inspired to learn. This means that incorporating metacognition empowers learners to learn and develop multiple intelligences at the same time (Gharial et al. 2017:269).

Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2010:82) sees metacognition as involving the following processes: thinking; planning; remembering; and, problem solving. More importantly, it is about the awareness of these thought processes. Each process comprises a number of strategies that are different for everyone. But the degree to which one becomes aware of these processes, and specifically strategies, reflects the degree of one’s metacognition. The more conscious one is of one’s strategies, then the more sensitive one is to them. This enables learning from others, adapting, refining and engaging with one’s own thinking, which assists with a higher and more complex level of thinking. Thus the potential for growth is obvious in a metacognitive process.

### **1.9.9 Best potential**

Maxwell believes that a person may not become the best in the world at a task, but can pursue the idea of best potential. This means taking on tasks that enable growth, because the process awakens potential. Lecturers and teachers can dream and work every day to reach their best potential (Maxwell, 2015:1-2).

The meaning of “best” is described as being of the highest quality and achieving the highest degree or standard (Waite, 2012:61). While “potential” is described as what one is capable of becoming or developing in a particular context. (Waite, 2012:561). In an educational context, the highest standard of learning that one is capable of developing is one’s best potential. Achieving this best potential will be one of the suggested outcomes of this study and the chief motivation for doing a teaching portfolio.

## **1.10 THE STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH**

**Chapter 1** consists of an introduction, contextualisation of the study, a statement of the problem, aims and objectives of the research, the research methodology and clarification of some of the concepts used.

**Chapter 2** is a detailed look at the relevant literature from all aspects of the research study.

**Chapter 3** gives an explanation of the research design and the methodology used in this research.

**Chapter 4** explains the data analysis and interprets the research findings.

**Chapter 5** provides a discussion of the results of the research, the findings, recommendations and conclusions reached by this study. It also includes any implications for education and contributions that this study makes to the field, as well as the limitations of this research.

## **1.11 CONCLUSION**

This chapter introduced the study and provided a clear understanding of the background to it. The research problem, aims and objectives were explained. There was a clear description of the methodology, the study’s delimitation and explanations were given of important terms. Chapter two focusses on relevant research to create an understanding of the nature of a teaching portfolio, and the value of doing one. It also uses strategies to create an analysis of a teaching and learning context where a lecturer would typically complete a teaching portfolio.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE TEACHING PORTFOLIO AND THE BENEFITS IT AFFORDS**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter aims to focus on the highlights obtained from the literature review regarding the role of a teaching portfolio in a lecturer's daily and ongoing teaching and learning experience. The literature will be used to determine the existing understanding of both the function and then the nature of a teaching portfolio. The end value of the teaching portfolio as a strategy and a tool to develop teaching and learning competence is important, and this chapter shows the value of a teaching portfolio when used as a lifelong learning tool. Furthermore, it clarifies the meaning of andragogy, reflection, critical review, motivation, best potential and self-actualisation as part of the process of completing a teaching portfolio.

#### **2.2 THE TEACHING PORTFOLIO**

A teaching portfolio is a strategy that documents, records and presents the evidence of successful teaching, therefore it provides evidence to that effect. It is a constructivist tool promoting reflection and maximising the benefits for self-improvement and learning. A teaching portfolio provides an effective and meaningful way of demonstrating your knowledge and skills that you have gained in the process of mastering your teaching. It helps to organise and document both your professional development and your competency in teaching (Frunzeanu, 2014:117).

Wolf (cited in Talburt, n.d:19) describes a teaching portfolio as a storage container displaying multiple sources of evidence that the lecturer has collected over time and documented during real-life teaching experiences. This evidence consists of knowledge and skills gained during this process. It reflects in a rich, ongoing way, the basis of both a teacher's and a student's improved performance. The use of a teaching portfolio stems from a belief that assessment is dynamic and that it provides a rich portrayal of a teacher and a student's performance.

Dajani (2014:62) explained a teaching portfolio as follows: it is an aid that teachers could use to structure their thinking about their teaching. The teaching portfolio demonstrates people's ability and accomplishments by helping to analyse their teaching approach. It assists in showcasing teachers' performance and practice. This requires active engagement through collaboration and discussion of teaching practice and it allows for learning from one another, which causes teachers to think deeply about their teaching practices. A teaching portfolio both expects and allows for educators to accept

responsibility for their own practice and this ensures commitment to their respective personal development. It assists them to rethink their teaching practices, which results in further growth of teaching and learning.

Campbell et al. (2014:3) describe a teaching portfolio as a carefully selected and unabridged version of documents that portrays a teacher's individuality, autonomy, professional growth and competence. This provides tangible evidence of a range of knowledge and teaching experiences that a teacher possesses as a growing professional. The teaching portfolio is in essence, a portrait that demonstrates a person's professional competence.

This documentation and ongoing development of a teacher's learning competencies correspond with the concept of the teacher as a lifelong learner, researcher and innovator. Examples of developing learning competencies are demonstrated in the following skills: independent work; planning; reflection; and, the ability to modify and be flexible about one's behaviour as required by the task. It is advantageous for lifelong learning to be emphasised as part of teacher education, where the focus needs to be on learning competency as much as on teaching competency. A student teacher must be trained to be a teacher as well as a learner, because the one influences the other (Meeus et al. 2009:402 & 405).

If lecturers were to assess their own learning competency, then this would mean assessing their own capacity to execute self-regulated learning. The teaching portfolio assists with this process by highlighting planning, reflective capacity and teaching about strengths and weaknesses. This means that the lecturers' teaching performance will be reflected on, both honestly and accurately to include errors and shortcomings. The point of this learning process will be not in the teaching but in the learning (Meeus et al. 2009: 405-407).

Internationally, some institutions are emphasising the use of teaching portfolios in their post graduate programmes for the reflective practice it requires. Teaching portfolios encourage critical thinking as well as allow the lecturer or teacher to reflect systematically and deliberately on their own teaching and learning, this will enhance learning as well as teaching practice. It will also encourage communal scholarship and professional dialogue with peers, this will result in supported group work. This "respectful intellectual pedagogic debate and lively reflective dialogue" promises to provide shared analysis and will result in "socially constructed" learning (O'Farrell, 2007: 3-6).

In an international study which took place in the Higher Education sector of the Republic of Ireland, it was found that teaching portfolio's were reported to be one of the things that resulted in positive changes in Teaching. All the respondents concerned reported improvements or benefits as a result

of doing a Teaching Portfolio (Donnelly, 2011:16). In the course assessments, teaching portfolio's were reported to have impacted on the quality of reflection on teaching practice, resulted in new teaching strategies, improved delivery in the class, increased confidence as well as the tendency to have a more student-centered approach to one's teaching (Donnelly, 2011:15). Reported vision building resulted due to the commitment to making a difference in the classroom and this was connected to the wider purpose of education, it was also believed to have given practical and moral meaning to the profession of teaching. The teaching portfolio served as the vehicle that enabled teachers to pursue learning through constant inquiry and thereby allow teachers to practice what they preach, benefiting both themselves and their students (Donnelly, 2011:19). In a Swedish research these benefits were reported by teachers who indicated that doing a teaching portfolio contributed to an emerging academic community of practice because teachers are required to verbalise their ideal teaching behaviour and then live up to this ideal (Pelger & Larsson, 2018:179). This was achieved through the promotion of the ability to repeatedly identify new problems and formulate new goals (Pelger & Larsson, 2018:181), the ability to gain new insights would be used in future teaching and this would build confidence in teaching ability, this was referred to as a "developmental trajectory" (Pelger & Larsson, 2018:184). This would impact on planning and create expertise and even scholarship of teaching and learning (Pelger & Larsson, 2018:189).

Portfolios tend to be reliable, because by their very nature the content is freely decided upon by the compiler and the report is done in an authentic learning context (Meeus et al. 2009:410-411). Dajani (2014:64) believes that the portfolio is a means to an end of improved results and achievement, as it is seen as an ongoing process of development. In addition, Dajani (2014:60) sees portfolios as living documents that are dynamic and change over time as educators critically reflect and evaluate their teaching. Teachers must constantly revise and update their portfolios throughout their careers, so that it describes their current strengths and accomplishments and also indicates the required areas of growth and development. This results in improved teaching and quality education, and it requires accountability.

A teaching portfolio ensures not only growth and development of educator or lecturer themselves in knowledge and skill, but it has a valuable impact on learner or students learning, results and accomplishments. This suggests that a teaching portfolio may be a strategy to assist in finding a solution to the problems identified by the Joint Education Trust report (JET) (JET, 2017) which is that we need to strengthen the calibre of teachers and the constraints found within the current educational system, namely, teachers' lack of content knowledge and teachers' disempowerment (Taylor, 2008:11 & 24). These issues related to teacher development in SA are also mentioned by JET Educational Services' report (JET, 2017). To assist in finding solutions, there are also calls for the South African Council of Educators (SACE) to draft a set of Professional Teaching Standards (PTS) which will ensure continued professional development of teachers. When finalised, these standards

will be implemented for newly qualified teachers in the teaching profession. During their teaching practice period, newly qualified teachers should be required to do the following:

- A compulsory period of induction and a requirement that a preservice teacher will submit a portfolio of evidence after one year of teaching practice. This forms the basis for acquiring a full licence on graduation.
- To retain a licence to teach, the educator will also need to meet SACE's continued professional teaching development requirements. This decision is supported by SACE's section (9.2), which requires teachers to involve themselves in ongoing personal, academic and professional growth through reflection, reading, study, research and participation in professional development activities (JET, 2017; 3).

Understanding the value of a teaching portfolio can help to motivate why it would be advantageous for it to form part of initial teaching training. It is a solution to empowering teachers, as well as developing their content knowledge. A teaching portfolio will ensure continued professional development and it could be a way to structure and motivate teacher development within a South African context.

### **2.2.1 Electronic portfolios**

Portfolios can be formatted in a variety of ways, and one of these is an electronic or e-portfolio. Meeus et al. (2009:401) refers to it as a professional development portfolio, which is focused on assessing learning competencies as well as the learning process. This means that teachers must learn to learn while learning to teach (GroiBock, 2012:42).

An e-portfolio uses electronic media to store artefacts that are collected and reflected on by the teacher (Frunzeanu, 2014:118). The teacher then creates a digital warehouse in an electronic format, which is representative of his/her competencies, and is built step-by-step. As the portfolio is updated on an ongoing basis, It allows for viewing by others, which enables peer learning as well as mentorship by tutors, and it can be easily done at an individual level or through multiple levels by electronic format (Neacsu & Dumitri, 2013:120). It is also used for job applications. . typical example of using a portfolio in modern society is through the use of social media and relevant here is a Facebook teaching portfolio. Although the content of the facebook portfolio is similar to the conventional drafts discussed in section 2.2.4, the convenience of the electronic format and social media availability, makes it a valuable tool. Facebook has available to its potential users videos, for ease of creating and learning how to optimise the use of a teaching portfolio (facebook,n.d.), as well as templates to assist teachers as users and professionals (facebook,n.d). You tube's Pocketful of Primary experieince offers the same type of video learning experience to potential teaching portfolio creators (You Tube, Pocketful of Primary, 2017).

For a student teacher, it creates a digital deposit that will demonstrate and showcase the quality of their practical activities. According to Neascu and Dumitry (2013:121), this assists to involve preservice teachers to grow and develop knowledge, skill and competence in their teaching. Ingle and Duckworth (2013:57) claims that the e-portfolio allows learning to be demonstrated in a structured, organised and multimedia format. Electronic portfolios have brought in new technological advantages, which appeals to and uses a generation's strength that is already technologically smart. This view is reaffirmed by GroiBbock who sees e-portfolios as a critical tool for the documentation of an individual student's progress. They are seen to be ideal for a fast advancing, modern-day, technological society, which results in critical reflection and becomes a key tool in a lifelong learning process. E-portfolios contain proof of acquired skills, document self-assessment, and they reflect the quality of the learning during the personal journey. It seems, portfolios work well and are even more useful when the process is accompanied by a personal mentor. E-portfolios allow for personal development through communication, feedback, collaboration as well as self-reflection. A teaching portfolio contains a "grow-model:" it helps with setting relevant goals, as it checks in reality what needs to be done, and, if necessary, it proposes alternative options with timelines that specify who will do what task and by when (GroiBbock, 2012: 41-45).

Collaborative learning and peer assessment have undergone significant development over the past decade. As a result, universities and teacher training institutions have implemented the use of e-portfolios as Personal Development Plans, because of their value in developing dynamic student learning and assessment (Luchoomun, McLuckie & van Wesel, 2010:21). The electronic portfolio plays a big part in personal development, work experience and training, especially for modern-day teachers.

The e-portfolio has three pedagogical functions according to Neasu and Dumitru (2013:122). They are a formative, stimulative and informative function. The formative function creates a space for a collection of samples and proof of teaching competence, the stimulative function incites creativity and arouses both interest and passion, while the informative function offers information to enable the purpose and objectives to be reached. It will play an even bigger role in the future, based on the advancement of modern technology in the field of teaching. Sung and Chang (2009:376) believe that it is necessary to investigate how information technology can be used to advance the potential of teaching portfolios used for professional development.

### **2.2.2 Preservice teachers utilising portfolios**

All portfolios are valuable to preservice teachers, not only an e-portfolio, but the emphasis must be on doing the portfolio from the beginning of teacher training. If this is done, then the results will be enriched growth and learning, because the real rewards of doing a teaching portfolio will follow



teachers into and across their teaching careers (Ravitech, 2014). The improved performance is the result of activities, such as, self-assessment, peer assessment, discussion and journal writing (Sung & Chang, 2009: 384). While doing a teaching portfolio, knowledge is constructed and reconstructed during the interaction between teachers and their supervisors, and this process offers both learning as well as professional development (Kecik, Aydin, Sakar, Dikdere, Aydin, Yuksel & Caner, 2012:175).

### **2.2.3 Personal learning environment, personal development plan and lifelong learning as a result of using a teaching portfolio**

The challenge of doing a teaching portfolio should result in a teacher's/lecturer's growth and learning. According to Leone (2013:1), a modern-day understanding of the concept for this process of growth is known as a PLE (personal learning environment). Across a lifetime of learning, which is called LLL, an individual must: personally plan, manage and direct their own knowledge and growth; try new activities, test new ideas and strategies; explore and create their own personal learning experience across a career, especially after they graduate; growth and development must be self-driven, individualised and sustained during an ongoing basis (Leone, 2013:1 – 10 & 16).

Similarly, Meeus et al. (2009:409) look at a key element of learning competency which results from the process of completing a portfolio. This includes the drawing up of a strategic personal learning plan which assists with monitoring development and progress, as well as specifies the resources needed for the learning experiences that will result in growth and development. A learning plan must address the questions of what, when and where regarding the growth process that a person will experience.

Pappas (2013:n.p.) also refers to lifelong learning as part of a process where an individual takes the initiative in diagnosing needs, formulating goals, identifying human and material resources for this learning. The learner chooses and implements learning strategies and then evaluates the learning outcomes. This constructivist approach expects the learner to set their own goals and pace of learning as well as manage their own motivation and reflection.

### **2.2.4 Research suggestions for the content of a typical teaching portfolio**

A portfolio is completed according to personal preference and effort, although it is informed through reflection, personal need and choice of the amount of time invested in the process. The principles of a typical portfolio are to collect, select and reflect on the following; evidence of; plans for and strategies to, accomplish new learning. Dajani (2014:62) suggests that the content of a teacher's portfolio consists of the following:

- Cover page
- Content
- Curriculum vitae
- Teaching philosophy
- Statement of teaching philosophies
- Professional development certificates
- Teaching objectives, strategies and methodologies
- Description of teaching materials
- Annual plan
- Lesson plan
- Teacher's reflection
- Teacher's action research
- Evidence of teaching effectiveness
- Innovative teaching projects
- Samples of worksheets
- Samples of students' work
- Samples of tests and exams
- Analysis of students' achievements (charts and diagrams)
- Flashcards (other important visual aids)
- Projects and activities
- School newspaper stories
- Videos
- Supervisors' reports
- Any other teaching accomplishments and documents

Dajani (2014:62) provides probably the most comprehensive list of what must form part of the contents of a good teaching portfolio. Most of what follows shows confirmation of the most important aspects contained in a teaching portfolio.

Talburt (n.d: 20) believes that portfolios should contain the following:

- Statement of teaching philosophy
- Description and evaluation of instructional approaches
- Course syllabi assignment
- Teaching goals
- Students' tests
- Samples of graded work

- Students' evaluations
- Statements from peers
- Statements from administrators who have observed the class
- Evidence of professional development
- Honours and awards

These ideas are used to reflect and modify a person's teaching. Then they become documents for ongoing reflection that leads to improved classroom performance (Talbert, n.d:20).

GroiBbock (2012:42) lists the following suggested content:

- Compulsory elements:
  - ❖ Reflections on philosophy
  - ❖ Principles
  - ❖ Strategies and methods of teaching
- Other possible suggested elements:
  - ❖ Teaching lesson plans
  - ❖ Worksheets
  - ❖ Handouts or presentations
  - ❖ Reflective artefacts
  - ❖ Essays, reports, posters
  - ❖ Photos, video-clips, presentations and graphics
  - ❖ Collaborative products from group work

Murphy & McLaren, (2007:105) suggest the following guideline in their specified content for Portfolio construction:

- Step 1: Statement of Teaching Philosophy
- Step 2: Feedback
- Step 3: Reflective Writing
- Step 4: Peer Reflection and Sharing
- Step 5: Promotion-type Entries and Documentary Evidence
- Step 6: Student and Peer Feedback
- Step 7: Final Reflection

All entries are added with the intention of development and growth, so all reflective efforts are of vital importance. Adding entries for the purposes of decoration must be avoided at all costs (GroiBbock, 2012:42). Ultimately the choice of what is included into a teaching portfolio should be subjective and decided on by the individual for the purpose of his/her personal intention, growth and development. Genuine reflection when motivated by an inner desire to grow will deliver the most rewarding result. However, depending on the reason why the portfolio is being done the person may be doing it, simply to follow instructions.

### **2.2.5 Guidelines for the required lecturers' teaching portfolio from the selected institution**

For the purpose of this study, the researcher approached the selected institution in order to obtain their guidelines for completing teaching portfolios. These guidelines provided insights into the type of portfolios that were completed by the lecturers who were interviewed for this study. The guidelines for a teaching portfolio that were found as a result of the literature study will be compared to the selected institution's guidelines. The researcher will also try to obtain some context from the tertiary institution as to how this portfolio forms part of the process for ongoing, continuous lecturer development.

### **2.2.6 Conclusion with regards the value of a teaching portfolio**

A teaching portfolio is a documented, planned, intentional and dynamic recording of a career and its development. It is functional, as it is implemented with a great deal of reflection and should result in a positive growth plan. In addition, a teaching portfolio shows self-assessment about shortcomings and allows for deep thinking about practice. This process of developing a teaching portfolio spans over a lifetime, a career and it becomes part of an ongoing process of the planned, professional development of a teacher/lecturer. This research will use the perception of a sample of lecturer's who have experience in using a portfolio as a form of andragogy and compare it with the findings from research. With this understanding one can then determine whether a teaching portfolio fits the requirements for teacher development sought by the NDP (NDP, 2017) as well as SACE's draft PTS.

## **2.3 KEY STRATEGIES AND AFFORDANCES RESULTING FROM TEACHING PORTFOLIO DEVELOPMENT**

### **2.3.1 Andragogy**

The findings in the introduction regarding an understanding of andragogy are summarised as follows: andragogy is about teaching adults; it is the practice, method and techniques used to move them towards independence; and, towards self-direction in the acquisition of learning. Foregrounded in this framework of adult learning is self-actualisation, which is the prime objective of adult learning (Pappas, 2013:n.p.). Similarly, this andragogy is akin to Maslow's concept of self-actualisation, which is a well-known theory that suggests that self-actualisation is the highest human need and one desired for maximum potential and growth (McLeod, 2017:n.p.). Self-development, growth and learning must be what teachers/lecturer's strive for in order to reach their best potential. Through this andragogy, they may self-actualise, resulting in growth and development, this impact will determine the value in the opinion of the individual lecturer's and it is this that must be considered for this research in the completing of a teaching portfolio.

In 1833, the word “andragogical” was first used by Alexander Kapp when he tried to describe Plato’s educational theory. Andragogy is seen as assimilating new information into an existing pool of knowledge and then discovering new ways to apply it to other situations. A person uses questions to gain more knowledge which then results in ongoing learning (Hare, 2017:n.p.).

Typically, adult learning is very self-directed, and is not reliant on a teacher. The learners will need to develop skills to assess the gaps in their own knowledge which then require further learning in order to enhance the learners’ understanding (Graham, 2017:n.p.). Knowles developed the five pillars of adult learning when he first created a theory of adult learning. In many ways, his theory still shapes an understanding of adult learning and, in this case, the learning that underpins a teaching portfolio (Graham, 2017:n.p.). Adult learning, according to Knowles (Graham, 2017:n.p.) normally displays these principles:

- Maturing self-concept: moving towards self-driven, self-directed and independent learning and behaviour.
- Increasing experience: developing meaningful values that build a reservoir of resources for new learning by encouraging intuition to develop.
- Increasing readiness to learn: focusing on an adult’s performance in various social roles (for example, employee, parent, spouse), where the learning benefits their social roles.
- Applying and orientation: focusing on knowledge, skills and a problem-solving ability to deal with issues related to all of the daily roles.
- Learning is internal: motivating an adult is not only to solve problems, but it also relates to self-development or success in a career.

According to Knowles (Graham, 2017:n.p.), the rewards of mature adult andragogy will be found in growth and development of the self as follows:

- A development of a mature understanding of oneself.
- An acceptance, respect and love towards others, especially in relation to people’s differences.
- A fluid and dynamic attitude towards life, which accepts and embraces change with every new experience and sees it as an opportunity to learn.
- An understanding and reaction to the root cause, not the symptom of a problem, which allows for appropriate responses and actions.
- An understanding of human experience, which appreciates and shares the traditions of the past as valuable learning opportunities.
- An understanding of the society in which people live and being able to shape change.

According to the well-known thinker on this topic, Shulman (1978:9) suggested years ago teaching was believed to be essentially a learnt profession. This means that the ideas concerning portfolio development in this study are in line with this foundational research, because new ideas develop, and deficient ones are dropped by those who produce knowledge and a new understanding. Shulman spoke of reflection and then ultimately new comprehension (Shulman, 1978:15), and how this fosters the goal of individual excellence. New comprehension results in a growth process, thus the move usually becomes desired and excellence becomes achievable. Growth, when it occurs becomes cyclical and ongoing, so it becomes a habit of professional development for educators and people in other professions who apply this process and also strive for excellence.

Meeus et al. (2009:407) found that the material contained in the portfolio is essentially informative: it is representative of a teaching performance; it includes mistakes and failures, if done honestly and accurately; but, the emphasis is on the learning as well as the teaching process. If this learning is growth and action orientated, then it could add value to teaching, as it would help an educator to move towards excellence. The National Development Plan for education 2030 (NDP, 2017) also mentions growth as an aim to strengthen the calibre of teachers in South Africa (Taylor, 2008:11 & 24).

This study has a particular interest in finding out from educators, who have completed a teaching portfolio, how they perceived and experienced this process. Another question is whether this process conforms to andragogy: does it cause growth; develop maximum potential; and, even move the educator to self-actualisation? If so, then will a teaching portfolio be a valuable teaching and learning approach? Finally, could a teaching portfolio be used as an ongoing tool to structure a learning experience that lasts a lifetime, and would it help educators move towards excellence?

In order for these questions to be explored, there are a number of factors that need further discussion, namely, reflection, critical review, constructivism, motivation, best potential, metacognition and self-actualisation. These aspects are addressed in the next section.

### **2.3.2 Reflection**

Reflection is a part of andragogy, which means that it becomes a vital part of this discussion. It is also a necessity when compiling a teaching portfolio. Reflection plays an important role in quality teaching: the intentional act of critical reflection through a lifelong journey enriches the educators' lives and it has the potential to transform their world (Canada-Philips, 2014:635). What does the process of reflection entail for a teacher?

Research indicates that there are various understandings of reflection. According to Weber (2014:83), reflection is central to learning. However, this premise is not new, because it is one found in Socrates and Plato's ideas. They were Greek philosophers who lived during the period 423/428 BCE. Socrates challenged everyone around him, including Plato, to question their beliefs and reflect on their learning in order to establish how things did or did not make sense to them as individuals. Socrates also proposed that we learn by observing what we do time and time again.

Ironically, people tend to learn the most when the outcome is different to their expectations, and not as they had anticipated. Under these conditions, they are more likely to engage in reflection, which is the crucial ingredient for learning and change (Weber, 2014:84). Effective reflection, according to Weber (2014:85) is specific, structured and accountable. It is crucial to reflect on how this new information or skill is relevant to daily life. In the context of this study, it is the ongoing process of doing a teaching portfolio that will have the most impact on the teaching and learning journey, instead of any single act.

Portfolios need to be reflective and when this is delivered on there will be resulting knowledge and values learnt, this will undoubtedly result in skill. Hughes and Moore, (2007:18) provide the specifics on the kind of knowledge and values developed during the process of completing a reflective portfolio:

The six areas of core knowledge are:

- subject material
- appropriate methods for teaching and learning in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme
- student learning
- use of appropriate learning technologies
- methods for evaluating teaching effectiveness
- implications of quality assurance and enhancement for professional practice.

The five professional values are:

- respect for individual learners
- commitment to incorporating the process and outcomes of relevant research, scholarship and/or professional practice
- commitment to the development of learning communities
- commitment to encouraging participation in higher education, acknowledging diversity and promoting equality of opportunity
- commitment to continuing professional development and evaluation of own practice

It is important to know that an action and learning-based approach can offer an understanding of what the tasks are in a process of reflection. Grift and Major (2013:15) state that reflection includes the following: thinking; planning; acting and reflecting. These are knowledge and skill-based tasks, which have a psychological value. They also value learning and growth, which are relevant characteristics when completing teaching portfolios.

According to Göbinger (2014:86), the value of reflective practice affects both practitioners and students in teaching and learning settings. Grift and Major (2013:49) see the role of reflection before and after the learning experience as playing a self-assessment or supportive task. It also acts as another form of scaffolding. Teachers should model these skills and encourage their students to reflect as a way of learning, which is conducted independently and regularly. This modelling is a powerful way of teaching students (Grift & Major, 2013: 50).

Göbinger (2014:88) looks at reflective practice in detail by using a six-stage mode of reflective practice. His aims are to analyse and search for value during the six stages, which provides valuable insights into the nature and process of reflection. Each stage forms the foundation for a sequential set of following stages:

- Stage 1: Description of what happened?
- Stage 2: Feelings – what were you feeling/thinking?
- Stage 3: Evaluation – what was good/bad about the experience?
- Stage 4: Analysis – what sense can you make of the situation?
- Stage 5: Conclusion – what else could I have done?
- Stage 6: Forming an action plan – if it arose again, what would I do?

Grift and Major (2013:15) explain the process of learning as follows, the emphasis is on the last sentence and on complete understanding:

I hear and I forget, I see and I remember,

I do and I understand, I reflect and I learn

Another interesting view on reflection is advocated by Ravitech (2014:7), namely, a practitioner's enquiry into one's own practice, which has the aim of developing and refining the role of reflection within the practice itself. This enquiry helps to achieve a vision of oneself as a professional, and it becomes an ethic which informs everyday practice. Practitioners must be committed to this practice and own the process of self-reflection.



Blumberg's (2014:52) view on reflection adds further understanding to the process undertaken when reflecting, because he believes that there are two types of reflective practice which help to develop expertise. In the first place, he includes reflection while engaged in the experience, and secondly, he includes reflection after the experience. This allows two opportunities for reflection to occur: the first is during the learning experience that happens, and it allows for correction and refinement along the way. The second is reflection after the experience, which allows for a more evaluative reflection that measures the complete process, what one will and will not do the next time. Thus two different learning opportunities exist in the same experience.

This systematic reflection process, suggested by Blumberg, is part of personal and professional development and allows for an examination of teaching behaviours, this clarifies what helps or inhibits learning. According to Blumberg (2014:53), the role that reflection plays is essential as well as critical, because it is the engine that drives the learning, the professional development and growth. As a teacher, reflective practice allows for the reorganising of knowledge and recognition of feelings to achieve greater insight. This results in a teacher's increased self-knowledge and efficiency.

According to Meeus et al. (2009:407), reflection was recognised as a valuable, intentional and strategic process. This was shown by their review of reflective thinking as a process of unconscious selection of spontaneous thoughts, which are channelled in the direction of a conscious objective. However, irrelevant thoughts are weeded out for effectiveness and this is considered an investment in terms of both time and effort. Reflection is a conscious and active practice of goal-orientated and structured thinking. This means that it is a process that has to be systematically learnt, and reflection is a powerful tool that teachers use to come to understand a complex teaching situation (Meeus et al. 2009:408). Foundational thinking like that of Dewey (1916:n.p.) as long ago as the early 1900's considered reflection to be intentional, meaningful, systematic and a scientific method, because it allowed for scrutiny and helped to achieve clarity in complex situations. By examining beliefs and assumptions, this assists teachers to consider the implications of actions, which leads to further insights and learning. This recognises the metacognition in the process. Reflective thinking fosters open-mindedness, wholeheartedness and taking responsibility when facing consequences for actions. These attitudes lead to the development of additional reflective habits. This results in educators becoming much more discerning about their teaching (Blumberg, 2014:51).

GroiBbock (2012:42) sees reflection as happening at a metacognitive and higher-order-thinking level. This is where one chooses to reflect on one's own cognitive processes and learning: it is a form of thinking that occurs when a problem takes place in the learning process; the problem is viewed from different angles to find new aspects and approaches; this new reflection enables a change of perspective, because through an analysis of past and present learning activities, conclusions can be reached which will assist future learning.

The above literature confirms that there is evidence that reflection is part of a metacognitive process. Reflection has varied stages that are learnt skills and they drive professional growth, which by its nature, leads to improved teaching knowledge, skills and strategy. However, reflection varies in degree and depth at a personal and at a task level. Reflection causes a process of deep analysis and benefits both the teaching and learning process. The types of personal growth identified in the research, which result from the process of reflection, are: mindfulness; insightfulness, particularly into oneself, but also about learning; and, open-mindedness. This means that reflection has an impact at a personal level, and it drives growth as a lifelong process. Thus reflection is found to be a vital part of the process, which includes andragogy and the completing of a teaching portfolio.

#### *2.3.2.1 Reflection as a motivator for personal growth for a teacher*

Griff and Major (2013:18) emphasise that in teacher education, metacognition needs to be introduced and developed. This means that growth must be initiated and facilitated by lecturers in this context, and it must be sustained as part of teaching practice from the beginning of preservice teachers' tertiary education. Teachers must be trained into this approach to teaching, where they learn to understand that reflection, questioning and enquiry into ones practice, is a lifelong process (Wilson, 2008:747). Blumberg (2014:49) suggests that to achieve the goal of teaching that promotes deep and intentional learning, lecturer's must continually and critically reflect on each of the essential aspects of teaching. This strategy has three interrelated facets, namely reflection, critical review and documentation. Critical review is discussed in more detail in section 2.3.3.

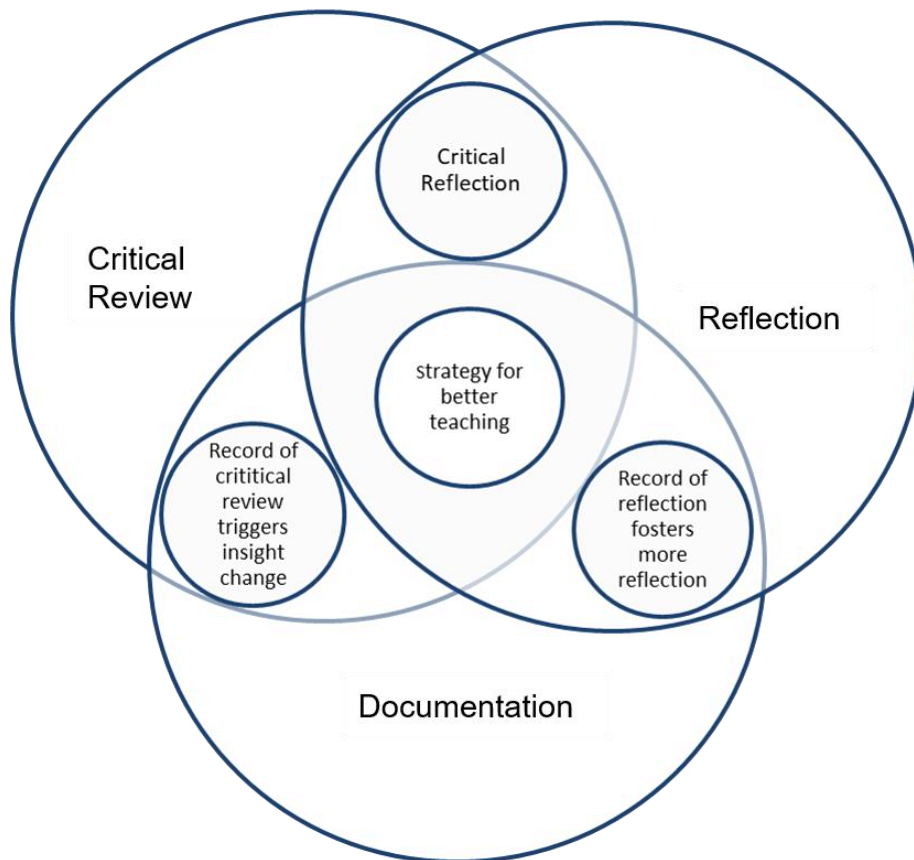
#### *2.3.2.2 Reflection as part of a teaching portfolio development*

Reflection forms part of teaching portfolio development, if reflection is understood to provide benefits that will assist in questioning the quality and success of teaching and learning then it becomes a valuable tool in ensuring effectiveness. This then raises the following questions: could this research shed light on the value of a teaching portfolio by personally interviewing lecturers who have completed a portfolio? Would the lecturers believe that doing a teaching portfolio has similar advantages to the ones suggested by the research on portfolios? Could the teaching portfolio be a useful tool for teaching and learning? Does the teaching portfolio qualify as an example of reflection-in-action that might be used as daily practice for growth and development? What impact could this research have on teachers' motivation and achieving their best potential? Finally, how would the doing of a teaching portfolio show the potential for metacognitive, intuitive and self-actualising qualities in a teacher? Reflection forms part of a process of which critical review is also important, critical review adds depth to the process which promises to deepen the extent of the growth.

### **2.3.3 Critical Review**

Blumberg's (2014:54) research places value on the importance of critical review, because it goes hand-in-hand with reflection and appears to impact greatly on the development of an educator's knowledge and skill as well as the teaching process. Critical review helps to analyse the dynamics of a teaching and learning experience and it differs from reflection, because it requires an integration of all the aspects that form a part of good teaching and that allows for the development of more insight and perspective. This suggests that a critical review is an important indicator in judging teaching effectiveness, as it encourages informed actions, which increases the probability that it will lead to the desired outcome for the teaching. Blumberg (2014:58) further requires that a critical review is documented, which adds to its relevance and value. Again, this requirement is in line with the process of completing a teaching portfolio, as it assists with: organising a person's thinking about teaching; encouraging deep reflection; reviewing; and, re-examining ideas and thinking. These records help to keep track of the details and ensure that they fit into a person's long-term expectations and goals.

According to Blumberg (2014:62), this integration of reflection and critical review, which is depicted in Figure 2.1, shows the complexity of the process. It assists teachers to evaluate deeply held assumptions and beliefs and causes them to ask questions about how and why they teach. This process leads to new insights about the impact of teaching on the learners' learning and attitudes. It is an informative process that happens across time, and it becomes an ongoing activity, which allows for a deeper meaning to develop. This integrated process provides insights into the self and is worth the effort and time expended.



**Figure 2.1: Three facets for better teaching (adapted by the researcher for use in this research) Source: Blumberg (2014:50)**

Researchers like Potter, (2007:163) refer to the reflection and critical review as critical reflection, it is seen as essential to the development of a portfolio. It affords a teacher or lecturer the opportunity to stand back from a teaching and learning experience and analyse it critically with the intention of having a better understanding of what did and did not work. It is about developing the ability to hold your own work up for scrutiny and analysis, this includes critical reflection on content and process of your teaching and your learning and to allow examination of its effectiveness by your students, your peers, your mentors, facilitators and superiors, as well as potential employees.

This process of interrogation of a person's own thought processes is also referred to as an "inquiry" by Earl and Timperley (2008:4). It becomes a habit of the mind and refers to an ongoing process of using evidence to make decisions. Inquiry is a way of finding things out, collecting data and interpreting evidence in ways that enhance and advance understanding. We link inquiry to habit of mind to emphasise that it is a way of thinking which is dynamic and has feedback loops. This process moves a person towards clearer directions and decisions. It also draws on and seeks out information that assists in bringing a person closer to a complete understanding of any one phenomenon.

The value of a critical review is that it documents thinking in the following ways: integrates informed actions; causes analysis and evaluation; enables the ability to scrutinise and discern information; and, gets to the bottom of the what, when, who why and how questions. All of these examples have an impact on knowledge, skill and deeper learning and insights. As seen in the discussion of a teaching portfolio, a critical review, like reflection, is an important part of the process while completing a teaching portfolio. This is because a critical review takes reflection to a deeper and more complex level.

#### **2.3.4 Rewards as a result of reflection and critical review**

Another view on portfolios is that it is an active documentation of deep reflection and rigorous critical review of one's own teaching, the whole process seems to have a greater value because it results from your own personal experience and it allows the skills of reflection and critical review to be improved and perfected in a way that is meaningful to you. Intuition plays a crucial role in professional decision making, because it relies on gut instinct. This means that intuition allows a practitioner to look beyond the obvious and be open to feelings, especially in the case where something does not feel right. The practitioner learns to rely on tacit recognition, judgements and skilled performance to solve professional problems. In perfecting intuitive knowledge, the practitioner requires honest feedback, which is developed by reflective practice. This process adds value to all professional training, especially for prospective teachers, and it should be used in daily teaching practice. There is an important differentiation between the following: "reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action". The former is gained during an experience and it is about reflecting on an incident, while it can benefit the situation. This approach is useful in teaching, where the professional is expected to react to an event at the time it occurs. While the latter form of reflection allows you the luxury of thinking about what happened after an event and to make changes at a later time. The practitioner then becomes a researcher in the context and uses what is known as "knowing-in-action," which is all the knowledge gained in similar situations as a frame of reference and to decide what will work best at a given time and for a particular incident. A teaching portfolio requires both "reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action", which means that reflection is used in conjunction with a critical review and is a detailed process (Mickleborough, 2015:889).

Tacit knowledge is knowledge that is understood or meant without being stated (Waite, 2012: 742). It is further understood through reflection and critical review, where the wisdom of intuition becomes a tacit "knowing-in-action" that allows for effective, intuitive decision making. Moilanen (2015:101) sees tacit knowledge as an informal domain of knowledge, as the understanding results from intangible sources like know-how, feelings, intuition and socially and culturally embedded ways of reasoning. Tacit knowledge is often formed in a way which is inaccessible to conscious thought and it is difficult to articulate. Sometimes tacit knowledge is ignored and even underrated. It is knowledge that develops through experiences and exposure to information during the course of a person's life.

Skilled interpersonal relations are crucial for effective teaching and learning, but much of this professional knowledge of interpersonal relations is tacit, therefore it is not easily communicated and understood (Glass, 2013:270 & 271). However, this does not lessen its impact on the success of a teaching and learning experience. It also indicates that the teacher or lecturer's skill in observing and verbalising tacit experiences during their teaching as well as while putting together a teaching portfolio may vary in depth as well as impact. This may well become clearer during the answering of the research questions from the data obtained during the personal interviews of this research project.

### **2.3.5 Constructivism**

Knowledge is created from within by the individual and stems from the individual's experiences and beliefs (Toraman & Demir, 2016:13). De Vos et al. (2014:310) find that reality changes constantly for any person: it can be constructed personally and subjectively by that person, but only if s/he is actively involved in the process. The completion of a teaching portfolio is a constructive process, because each participant's reality influences the way a question is answered as well as how a phenomenon is viewed. As people strive to make sense of their social world, they create new knowledge that changes and evolves in an effort to find answers to unanswered questions. Thus, a person's reality is constructed on a continuous basis, with increasing complexity that allows for a deeper understanding to develop. When applied to teaching, this means that in-service and preservice teachers should be encouraged to reflect more on their practice, and to employ teaching approaches that are consistent with constructivism (Wideen, Mayer-Smith & Moon, 2015:164). If this approach is adopted, then it will continuously impact on their knowledge, understanding and skills. In turn, it will have an impact on the teachers' quality of questioning, which encourages growth in their teaching competence.

Constructivism, this study's underlying theoretical framework, stresses active learning through internal actions, such as, recognising, analysing and comparing the different forms of thinking. These activities are all essential to constructing knowledge. Learning is also believed to take place through a process in which knowledge is built on a foundation of prior knowledge, so we learn from the known to understand the unknown. This means that learning is based on experiences and ideas that already exist, and they provide meaning for the new learning (Krahenbul, 2016:97).

Donald et al. (2010:80) considers constructivism to be an approach which shows that knowledge is continuously and actively constructed, then reconstructed, personally by an individual in a socio-cultural context. Firstly, constructivism requires a lecturer to be an active agent, who must continuously participate in the construction of personal meaning. A person uses feedback to shift and change strategies to adapt to the demands of a situation. Mediation and scaffolding also assist with the adaptation and development of more powerful strategies. Secondly, knowledge is constructed in different social contexts on a continuous basis: language, values and world view all

impact on learning. Thirdly, metacognition is an awareness of an individual's own cognition, which encompasses thinking, planning, remembering and problem solving. It refers to all the activities that happen in the mind.

Metacognition reflects the degree to which a person is aware of what and why she/he does something. This awareness leads to looking critically at your own thinking processes, in order to adapt and refine it, so that an individual can be learning on an ongoing basis. By actively engaging with thinking at a deeper and deeper level, it becomes an, ongoing and daily strategy. Fourthly, a person changes, shapes and adapts to the world by using available tools. An example is the system of abstract symbols known as language, which has three forms, namely, written, spoken and reading. This system helps an individual to adapt to a social context (Donald et al. 2010: 80-83). Constructivism therefore results in valuable and beneficial learning by adapting, changing and growing existing knowledge and thinking on an ongoing basis in varying degrees of in-depth thinking.

Good teaching should ideally result in good learning, especially if a teacher consciously, continuously and actively searches for effective ways of connecting with the students' learning process. Constructing this type of learning has seven principles, namely:

- Process as well as content: Focusing on both what is taught and how it is taught are important.
- Active Learning: Creating opportunities to turn the unfamiliar into the familiar through active learning.
- Connect the familiar to the unfamiliar: Understanding where learners are in their thinking and using this to move to new knowledge.
- Guided discovery: Learning by discovery means that the teacher guides the learners to discover the structural and key strategic aspects.
- Scaffolding: Mediating the learning by supporting and strengthening the learners' mastery of this understanding through strategies that are slowly removed by the teacher.
- Group work and cooperative learning: Involving actively all of a group's members to solve a challenging problem in a collaborative way, despite conflict (Donald et al. 2010:80-89).

In this research constructivism or the building up of knowledge is reported on during the interviews by the lecturer's, as the advancement of knowledge and skill in their own teaching practice through using a teaching portfolio. The evidence obtained that the student or learner's knowledge is extended through the growth experienced by the lecturer as a result of doing a teaching portfolio provides further evidence of a constructive process. Constructivism is also seen as a result of this research

in the increased understanding of the use of teaching portfolio's for both the researcher as well as for the reader of this research study.

### **2.3.6 Metacognition as the central concept of this study**

From the above discussion on reflection, critical review and constructivism, it is apparent that metacognition is at the crux of the matter. Metacognition is knowledge of the cognitive process, and it plays an important part in learning. This is why metacognition has been researched as part of psychology, educational psychology and education (Stankov & Kleitman, 2014:309). Metacognition, is seen as knowledge about one's own cognitive processes, plays a very important role in learning and decision making (Paiva, 2016:83).

Norman and Fumes (2014:311) claim that metacognition is an ongoing intellectual act, which is perceptual and evaluative of knowing as well as feeling. It answers the question of what guides both thinking and feeling. Metacognition is seen to improve learning in terms of efficiency, time and capacity for understanding (Manasia & Pârvan, 2014:447). Choi (2010:312) adds the idea of "shared metacognition", which is relevant to teaching portfolios, as it increases cooperative negotiation and problem solving of a shared task. This idea offers greater insight into a task, especially when teaching portfolios and metacognition are completed in conjunction with a mentor. The end result is superior, because of the collaboration.

According to Blumberg (2014:45), metacognition is when an individual becomes aware of his/her thinking processes, by having an internal conversation. This process enables: monitoring of progress, obtaining a level of mastery towards goals; time management; and, using resources and strategies. It also indicates whether these processes are appropriate or whether there needs to be alterations made to them.

Higher-order processes, such as problem solving and decision making, are assisted by sophisticated metacognitive skills, where people are aware of their own thinking, memory and language abilities (Watts, Cockcroft & Duncan, 2017:376). This shows "thinking about thinking." Gharial et al. (2017:260) see metacognition as not only the awareness of your own thought processes, but also the ability to regulate the cognitive processes in learning. Success in learning comes from being empowered: these higher-order-thinking processes empower the thinker, which provides the confidence to then solve problems autonomously. As an active participant, the learner is then motivated and inspired to learn and this in turn will result in rich and valuable learning in all areas of intelligence (Gharial et al. 2017:269).

Strong metacognitive skills not only result in success in learning in higher education but also affect a person's life. Metacognitive skills therefore comprise of two components, namely, knowledge of mental capabilities and the ability to evaluate progress.



Grift and Major (2013:9) provide insight into how to build metacognitive capabilities, to optimise learning experiences. The mind's productive habits are first identified and then they are taught. The emphasis is on essential and learnt skills that will lead to optimal learning and development.

To achieve the best available potential, it is necessary to master these skills, which are divided into three sub-categories:

- Self-regulated thinking and learning
- Critical thinking and learning
- Creative thinking and learning

Grift and Major (2013:11&15) believe that these skills provide a culture of learning that will develop enduring, lifelong and able learners: the strategy of reflection is related to these metacognitive capabilities, and it also places this learning as a priority for all teachers. This view is based on the premise that teachers need to understand learning in order to succeed at teaching. Teachers take the lead by using what they already know about being learners themselves. Reflection is central to this metacognitive process: the teacher begins by drawing on personal experience of learning and then on other people's research and ideas. All these serve as a catalyst in thinking about one's own practice, as it evolves in any situation. Thus, metacognition is seen as a form of self-regulation (Chiaburu et al. 2015:368).

According to Railean et al. (2017:39&40) four strategies are used to develop metacognition, namely:

- Brainstorming: to develop metacognitive monitoring and self-regulation
- Questioning: to develop metacognitive monitoring and self-regulation through questions which can concern content, delivery, motivation, monitoring and feedback, assessment or planning
- Concept mapping: to question the appropriateness, accuracy and comprehensiveness of the map
- Meta-teaching: to make a conscious effort to plan, monitor and assess the success of teaching on a constant basis with the intention of improving both teaching and learning

Makrova (2017:65) supports the assumption that all students are capable of metacognition, which is thinking how better to perform cognitive actions and also to be aware of how they learn. This includes cognitive capabilities, such as monitoring memory as well as comprehension, which helps learners to become more autonomous and effective in their learning.

The development of metacognition is a skill that must be taught to learners at school and it should be learnt by the time they reach higher education. Being aware of thinking, and how to use these metacognitive strategies appropriately in any context, is related to a higher degree of achievement (Callan, Marchant, Finch & German, 2016:1485). Larson (2009:185) also supports this view, because metacognitive strategies such as goal setting, monitoring, self-checking and regulating learning processes by adapting to the demands of a task, must be taught as part of everyday classroom activities.

Activities that guide metacognition, which DePaul University encourages their students to practice, are based on Darling-Hammond's key to facilitating lasting learning experiences and developing lifelong learners.

The guiding metacognitive activities are:

- To identify what they already know
- To articulate what they have learnt
- To communicate their knowledge, skills, and abilities to a specific audience
- To set goals and monitor their progress
- To evaluate and revise their own work
- To identify and implement effective learning strategies
- To transfer learning from one context to another
- (Darling-Hammond, 2003, cited in DePaul University Resources, Metacognitive Activities, n.d:1).

Activities that promote metacognition should therefore always:

- Facilitate equal participation
- Ensure students do most of the talking
- Take place before, during, and after an experience
- Happen in different configurations, such as, individuals, pairs, a small group or a large group (DePaul University Resources, Metacognitive Activities, n.d:1)

According to the literature, the habits of mind developed during the process of completing of a teaching portfolio are found to be in line with metacognitive strategies. The reasons are that that these processes lead lecturers: to evaluate their progress; to self-regulate their thinking and learning; to take part in critical and creative thinking; and, to brainstorm as well as to question. This process shows that completing a teaching portfolio is a valuable, metacognitive learning tool.

### **2.3.7 Reflection and critical review linked to metacognition**

Metacognition is not a new concept in education as it is found to be used years ago by theorists like (Dewey, 1916; Flavell, 1979; Kolb, 1984;5; Korthagen & Kessels, 1999). Reflection and a critical review of individual experience have been seen to be the key to unlock the doors of learning and knowledge creation in the past and present. But strategies to promote metacognition are relevant to the future too. Penny Light, Chen, and Ittelson (2012:86) coined the term “folio thinking”, which refers to learning that encourages students: to integrate learning experiences; to enhance self-understanding; to promote taking of responsibility for their learning; and, to support the development of a personal intellectual identity. This process gives insight into the value of a portfolio, as it shows the results of doing portfolios, which leads to metacognitive thinking that includes reflection and critical review to construct knowledge. This means that “folio thinking” is here to stay as way of self-monitoring the development of competency in teaching and learning, and it must become a way of life for all teachers.

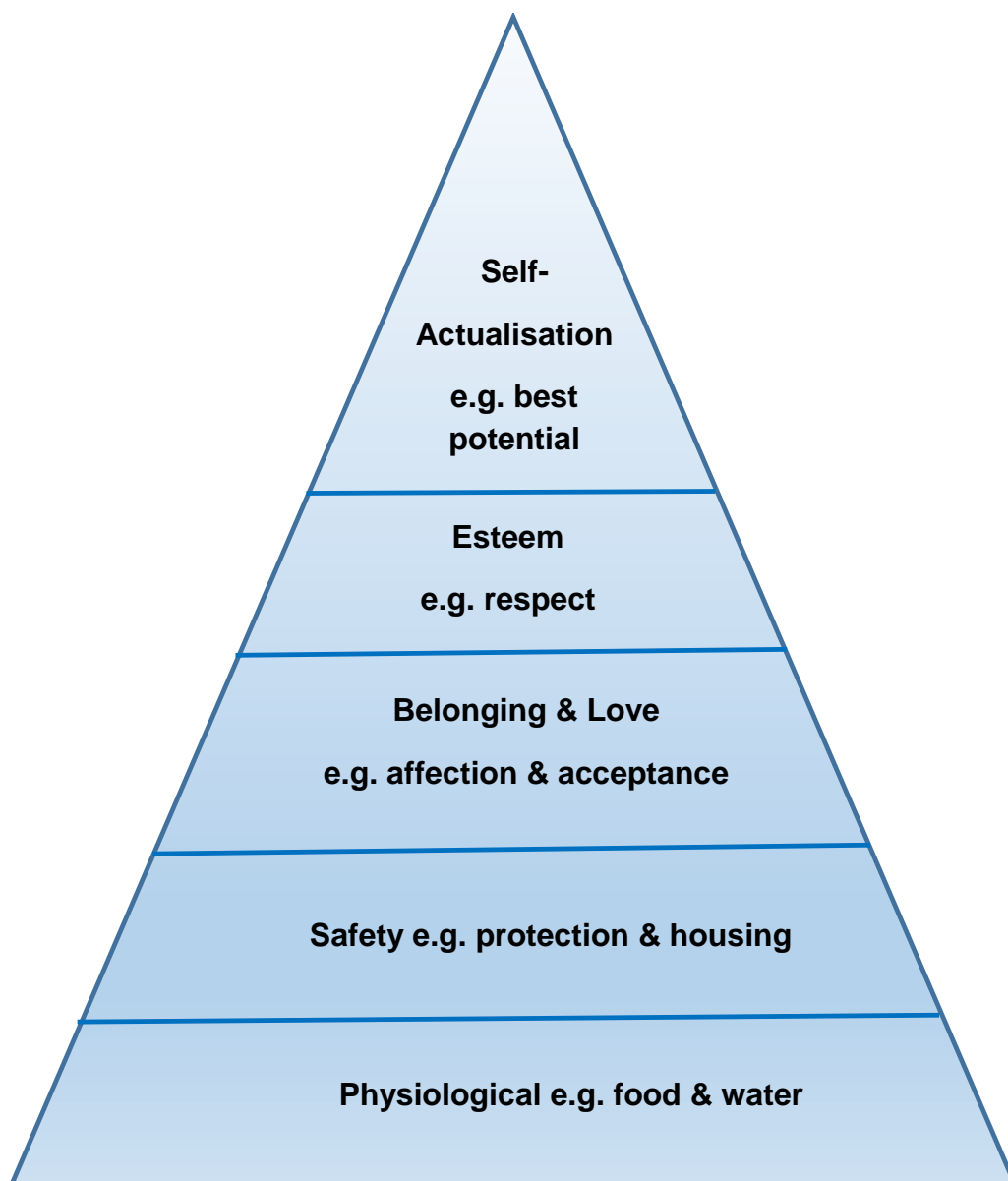
### **2.3.8 Motivation**

Motivated students are essential to ensure successful efforts to develop metacognition. A motivated learner is more willing to make and sustain efforts to develop his/her metacognition, as without this motivation, there will be no activity. Metacognition requires high mental effort as well as high motivation, but this is relative to learners’ ability to reach their full metacognitive potential (Railean, Alias & Sulaiman, 2017:34-35). Yunlu and Clapp-Smith (2014:389 & 390) affirm this view, because they find motivation is necessary for metacognition. They state that motivated people are more likely to be engaged, commit effort and persist in order to succeed. The engagement and regulation of cognitive function as well as metacognitive strategies are an essential part of this process.

Motivation is a vital part of any learning and it determines the will to take on the challenge of the learning. It encompasses whether one feels able, confident and willing to engage with learning. Motivation is a complex process and it can be understood in various ways including from a constructivist perspective (Donald et al. 2010:95). With regards a teaching portfolio, motivation becomes a key factor as to the reason why a teaching portfolio is done, this will in turn affect the outcome.

Maslow believed that motivation in human behaviour was linked to the fulfilment of needs ranked according to a hierarchy (Donald et al. 2010:96). This means that once lower level needs are fulfilled, then higher levels of needs can emerge and be fulfilled, which is a humanistic model. In learning, the social context and life experience interact with a learner, so basic needs like physiological (food and water), safety and belonging needs (affection and acceptance) are required to be sufficiently

fulfilled for higher needs to emerge. Examples of these higher needs are esteem (respect for others) and, specifically relevant to this research, self-actualisation (fulfilling a person's best potential). Figure 2.2 depicts Maslow's hierarchy of needs, where the basic needs that must be met first are placed at the bottom of the hierarchy. At the highest point, there are the self-actualisation needs, which rest on a foundation of all the other needs that have to be met first. Internal needs interact with external influences and experiences, and they are dependent on the availability of opportunities. The relative fulfilment of these needs influence a person's motivation. By availability of opportunity, it means that there is an opportunity to fulfil a person's best learning potential, which is a form of self-actualisation. Applied to this research, it affects a lecturer's motivation to take the challenge of learning to the next level. This motivation is an integral part of leaning and it will vary across a career (Donald et al. 2010:96), which impacts on the development of a lecturer's teaching and learning.



**Figure 2.2: Maslow's hierarchy of needs (adapted from Donald et al. 2010:95).**

### **2.3.9 Best potential**

If the growth process from learning is to lead to perfecting oneself on an increasing degree, this will assist in reaching one's own personal best potential. Someone committed to reaching this best potential will strive to achieve so on an ongoing basis and should be personally motivated to do so: Becoming one's best should be a passion in life! One may not become the best in the world, but one can pursue your own best potential. For this one must take on tasks that cause one to grow and stretch, be in over one's head because it keeps you strong and pushes you to your full effort (Maxwell, 2015:1).

Maxwell (2015:2) believes that becoming one's best self is part attitude and part strategy. The following aspects are part of this strategy to become one's best self:

- Focus on your strengths
- Focus on today
- Focus on your priorities
- Focus on results
- Focus on your contribution to the world

As Maxwell (2015:2) suggests educators can have big dreams, and work every day in order to reach this "best potential." Best is described as being of the highest quality or to the highest degree or standard (Waite, 2012:61), while potential is described as what one is capable of becoming or developing (Waite, 2012:561). In an educational context, the highest standard that a lecturer is capable of achieving is their own desired learning standard, and the best version of a lecturer is determined by him/herself as well. Achieving this best potential is one of the suggested outcomes of this study and the chief motivation for doing a teaching portfolio. This links to what Murphy and MacLaren (2007:92) suggest as being able to use a teaching portfolio to identify professional developmental needs and plan targeted and local support and growth opportunities for a personalised trajectory of professional development.

### **2.3.10 Self-actualisation**

Maslow popularised the concept of self-actualisation as a process that some individuals undergo throughout life. He believed that most mentally healthy individuals follow a path that allows them to self-actualise and to realise their true potential. As these individuals grow older and mature, they are able to become selfless and focus on causes outside of themselves, which allows them to feel more fulfilled (D'Souza & Gurin 2016:1). Maslow suggests that self-actualisation is the highest human need and one that is desired for maximum potential and growth (McLeod, 2014:n.p.).

McLeod (2018:n.p.) reports that Maslow found fifteen common characteristics in people he identified as self-actualised. Examples of the people he referred to were Albert Einstein and Abraham Lincoln. People are seen to self-actualise in their own unique way, but they tend to share certain characteristics. There are no perfect people, so self-actualisation must be seen as a matter of degree. The common characteristics of people who are self-actualised include the following:

- Perceive reality efficiently and can tolerate uncertainty
- Accept themselves and others for who they are
- Spontaneous in thought and action
- Problem-centred (not self-centred)
- Unusual sense of humour
- Able to look at life objectively
- Highly creative
- Resistant to enculturation, but not purposely unconventional
- Concerned for the welfare of humanity
- Capable of deep appreciation of basic life experience
- Establish deep satisfying interpersonal relationships with a few people
- Peak experiences
- Need for privacy
- Democratic attitudes
- Strong moral/ethical standards

According to McLeod (2018:n.p), behaviour which leads to self-actualisation is shown:

- Experiencing life like a child, with full absorption and concentration
- Trying new things, instead of sticking to safe paths
- Listening to own feelings in evaluating experiences, instead of the voice of tradition, authority or the majority
- Avoiding pretense ('game playing') and being honest
- Being prepared to be unpopular if your views do not coincide with those of the majority
- Taking responsibility and working hard
- Trying to identify your defenses and having the courage to give them up

Pappas (2013:n.p.) sums it up aptly in that self-actualisation is seen as the “prime objective of adult learning”. If reaching one’s best potential through andragogy causes self-actualisation and the strategies of reflection and critical review cause a constructive growth process which is metacognitive in nature then the following should also be true: A teaching portfolio encompasses a tool that will successfully structure all of your growth and learning, on an ongoing basis. All that is

needed is the understanding of what to do and the motivation to want to create a teaching portfolio for one's personal growth.

## **2.4 THE VALUE OF A TEACHING PORTFOLIO AS A CONSTRUCTIVE AND METACOGNITIVE TOOL**

This section serves to use the findings of the literature to discover the value of a teaching portfolio and record it in a concise way. The researcher expected to find that the affordances of a teaching portfolio would be summarised into knowledge and skill development, because that seemed predictable. However, after analysing the literature in this review, this prediction was not obvious, because an affordance on skillset transpired. Although knowledge prescribes skills and skills provide the evidence that new knowledge has been acquired, none of the affordances remain solely knowledge based. By inference, this indicated that when using a teaching portfolio, this knowledge of learning was converted into and reported as a skill and competence in a person's teaching. In other words, what was learnt was never just based on knowledge, instead it was applied and used to improve lecturing and teaching competence. In Table 2.1 this is recorded as a combined skillset.

**Table 2.1: Combined skillset resulting from doing a teaching portfolio**

<b>Task-based skill Development</b>	<b>Personal/professional skill development</b>	<b>Metacognitive/higher-order skill development</b>
Reflection	Andragogy	Self-actualisation
Critical review	Maximising potential	Fulfils the highest human need
Structured thinking	Independence	Move towards excellence
Orders thinking	Self-development	Maximum potential
Ability to strategise	Self-direction	Deeper Insights
Documents thinking	Self-assessment	Insightful
Represents teaching performance	Intentional & informed actions	Penetrates assumptions
Goal setting ability	Active engagement	Penetrates values
Evaluates	Planning	Penetrates beliefs
Analysis of performance	Growth in teaching practice	Penetrates skills
Analysis of knowledge	Growth in competence	Questions all past learning
Analysis of skills	Growth in own academics	Internal conversation
Analysis of values and attitudes	Fundamental planning of teaching and learning	Builds wisdom
Analysis of attitudes	Learns constantly to renew thinking	Encourages open-mindedness
Monitors	Ongoing change of perspective	Develops tacit knowledge
Creativity	Fine-tuning of progress	Honing of intuition



Makes decisions	Constructivist approach	Creates an architectural role to thinking
Plans to guide learners	Personal growth	
Plans learners' interaction	Accountability for self	
Plans high learners' success	Accountability for learner	
Plans high learners' achievement	Modelling of all the above learning to learners	
Develops guidance for learners	Lifelong learner	
Develops competent learners	Comes alongside & supports individual learners	
Plans learning environment	Valid and worthy time management	

<b>Emotional Development</b>
Builds confidence
Builds self-concept
Builds self-image

Table 2.1 reflects on the combined value of a teaching portfolio, where knowledge is developed, but not in isolation. At the same time as knowledge development, skill in teaching is developed, because by its very nature teaching is about application. Many of the skills are metacognitive, and they all appear to be constructive in nature as well as conducive to the development of both teaching and learning skills. Some of these skills develop professional competency, some personal competency, while others develop a person at an emotional level. This demonstrates the value of doing a teaching portfolio with regard to teaching and learning competence. In addition, these skills show andragogy, because they successfully maximise a lecturer's growth and potential, which results in a feeling of being fulfilled.

This is evidence of the prime objective of adult learning, which is self-actualisation and that according to Maslow one the highest human needs and one desired for maximum potential and growth (McLeod, 2014:n.p.) and according to Pappas (2013:n.p.), the prime objective of adult learning.

#### **2.4.1 The value of a teaching portfolio within a South African context**

The process of doing a teaching portfolio delivers results that are consistent with the growth and development plans set out for teachers in the National Development Plan 2030 (NDP) for Education in South Africa (JET, 2017). A teaching portfolio is also in line with the Department of Basic Education's proposals for teacher development and SACE's proposed professional standards for teachers. This means that a teaching portfolio also complies with development plans for preservice teachers and it provides a tool that will assist them in professional and personal development after graduation. In addition, a teaching portfolio could be used to meet the requirements for the one year of preservice practical experience, which might be implemented as part of the requirements to achieve a teaching licence in South Africa. A teaching portfolio is a tool that will assist the NDP 2030 plan to create a community of teachers, because the process of doing a teaching portfolio involves peer review as well as learning from people with experience (JET, 2017). Mentoring of teachers happens through planning, sharing and strategising for professional and personal growth. A teaching portfolio complies with developing all of these growth processes.

#### **2.4.2 Motivation for doing a teaching portfolio**

The teaching portfolio is found in the research to have significant value in the opinions of Campbell et al. (2014:3), Meeus et al. (2009:410-411) and Dajani (2014:64). The combined skillset (Table 2.1) is significant, because it has the potential to impact on a lecturer's teaching and learning in a positive way. The higher-order value and development of metacognitive skills is most noteworthy. When documented it creates a visible awareness and the result creates an emphasis on the growth,

development and competence clearly recorded. The final product is probably unprecedented by any tool, in its value for professional as well as personal and emotional growth in teaching and learning.

There is little or no research that documents any failures or shortcomings in doing a teaching portfolio, because it is an adaptive process. This means that the person compiling a teaching portfolio adapts it to a specific context which normally requires them to highlight their success and development. An alternative explanation for the lack of research, which shows the shortcomings of this approach, is that an individual chooses not to use a teaching portfolio at all when there is lack of achievement.

If the process of doing a teaching portfolio changes an educator's perspective, then s/he could report on a new perspective. This growth process would be documented in a teaching portfolio. As a result, this research has focused on obtaining and documenting a first-hand account of educators' personal perspectives concerning their experiences of developing a teaching portfolio. This sample was based on personal interviews with lecturers in a tertiary institution, where the researcher asked them whether a teaching portfolio enabled their growth and development.

## **2.5 THE CONTEXT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING RELATED TO A TEACHING PORTFOLIO**

### **2.5.1 Introduction**

Teaching and learning never happens in a vacuum. In an analysis of the context, it becomes clear that factors do vary in each learning situation. This is the background against which an individual experience of completing of a teaching portfolio happens. The context is inevitably complex and dynamic, and it sets the scene for the individual educator's experience. It becomes part of the whole which helps to account for a lecturer's response to the interview questions. In this study, the focus is on the following aspects of the teaching and learning context:

- the teacher
- the learner
- the learning
- the environment

In the introduction to this study, the researcher briefly defined each of the above terms, and they will be elaborated on in this chapter:

### **2.5.2 The lecturer / teacher / educator**

The terms lecturer, teacher and educator are used interchangeably in this study, and in this context, they are understood to have the same meaning. By definition, an educator is a person who gives

someone information or causes someone to understand (Waite, 2012:748). Bergmann and Sams (2012:62) state that a teacher or lecturer is someone who guides a student to a desired end in a way that is meaningful to each individual learner. This means that a lecturer can be seen to be like a supportive coach, encourager and facilitator (Bergmann & Sams, 2012:71). However, this role is re-defined on an ongoing basis, because it is dynamic and adapts to ensure the success of the learning.

Learning is considered to be a priority for most teachers: they build their professional practice by developing their wisdom, expertise, knowledge, skills and experience on an ongoing basis. Grift and Major (2013:10&11) believe that teachers must deconstruct their mental models in order to understand them better. This analysis enables them to identify the beliefs that impact on their behaviour and decisions while teaching and learning. As their teaching evolves, teachers construct new learning about their practice. The term wisdom is understood as showing insight, and teachers who do so support high levels of learning. They model this behaviour so that others can learn from them. According to Weber (2014:83), teachers' reflective thinking has to be deep enough to penetrate the underlying assumptions, values and standards, which allow for critical examination of their personal framework (Meeus et al., 2009:408). Teachers must evaluate and critically reflect on their thinking in this deep way in order to grow and learn. This process is similar to the essence of doing a teaching portfolio.

Bergmann and Sams (2012:54) in their approach called "flip-the-classroom" claim that it is vital for teachers to admit when they do not know the answer to a question in the classroom on an everyday basis. They must be willing to demonstrate how to research the question with the students, thereby demonstrating what it means to be the lead learner in a classroom.

Grift and Major's (2013:7) understanding of a teacher is creative, because they describe teachers as "Architects of learning". They also mention the following three fundamental goals of a teacher: A teacher must ensure that their students learn successfully; they are mindful about how teaching practices impact on successful learning; they learn and teach by using thinking, planning, acting and reflecting to ensure success of learning.

Teachers are sagacious in the sense that they can utilise this knowledge in a practical sense to support their students' learning. In turn, this will assist teachers to develop their own wisdom and make sound judgements about teaching and learning (Grift & Major, 2013:11 & 12).

SACE (South African Council of Educators) the organisation to which all practicing teachers in South Africa must become a member, it guides professional conduct with a draft professional standards list their mandate as one to strengthen and uphold the profession of teaching in South Africa (JET, 2017). According to this document, these teaching professional standards will be refined and strengthened through a process, and they will be produced and owned by practicing teachers. This

means that educators will be active in an ongoing process to define their roles as teachers, which supports Bergman and Sam's (2012) views as previously stated.

In the NDP's Report (NDP, 2017:40), under the section related to teachers' performance, it emphasises that professionalism, and conditions that enhance professional conduct, must be rebuilt. There needs to be accountability for performance, which will be enhanced by strengthening professional development, peer review and teacher support systems. In the section concerning research and development, there is a special focus placed on the importance of teachers' calibre, as this quality will improve higher education. The context of this research, which focuses on a teaching portfolio, is strongly aligned to support the intentions of both SACE and the NDP 2030, as it aims to grow and develop teachers who can deliver on these proposed standards.

SACE's standard number 9 expects an educator to do the following with regard to their development, which is consistent with the affordances of a teaching portfolio:

- Teachers must belong to communities that support their professional learning.
- The wellbeing of learners requires collaboration between teachers and other professionals.
- Teachers involve themselves in ongoing personal, academic and professional growth through reflection, reading, study, research and participation in professional development activities.
- Established teachers in a school provide a supportive environment for the induction and mentoring of new colleagues, as well as preservice and newly qualified teachers (JET, 2017).

The above findings emphasise the teachers' role as a complex one involving a variety of different roles that are interpreted by personal opinion. Other teacher roles could include the following: a coach; guide; encourager; supporter; architect; inventor; planner; strategist; a creative individual, a model and demonstrator; a knowledgeable and skilled person, who has wisdom; and, the lead learner in a class.

Teachers view teaching in different ways, as it depends on who they are, what experiences they have had as teachers and what teacher training programme they underwent. In addition, it depends on their ideas concerning teaching and whether these ideas were ever challenged, discussed or not interrogated at all. These factors influence development and growth in different ways (Wilson, 2008:245). Teachers need encouragement to be mindful about how their teaching practices impact on successful learning, but this requires that their consciousness is raised so that they are able to make informed decisions in the classroom on a daily basis (Grift & Major, 2013:14).

It is vital for a teacher to become a lifelong learner, because it seems that 'learning to learn' becomes the way you learn how to teach. This study suggests that a teaching portfolio may be a useful strategy or tool to assist with this process.

### **2.5.3 The learner/student**

In the context of this study, the term learner and student are used interchangeably, as both refer to the one who is learning. It is important to look at the learner as part of a dynamic process, because the teacher needs someone to teach. It is only through the learner's success that the educator's effect is noticed. This means that the learner's role is an interactive one, which is equally important as the teacher's role. In the introduction, the researcher briefly looked at the meaning of the term 'learner' and suggested that it referred to someone who is receiving instruction and/or gaining knowledge and skills. It is someone whose concepts are forming, changing and altering for the better as a result of learning and possibly also good teaching (Waite, 2012:412).

Bergmann and Sams (2012:60) suggest that in order to succeed, students must take responsibility for their own learning. This means taking ownership of their education, so that the educational process becomes their own. Students' satisfaction is widely recognised as an indicator of the quality of the students' learning and teaching experience (Ciobanu & Ostafe, 2014:31).

Bergmann and Sams (2012:74) found that teachers need engaged students for successful learning to occur and have identified productive habits of the mind, these are:

- Self-regulated thinking and learning
- Critical thinking and learning
- Creative thinking and learning

By providing a learning culture that focuses on self-regulation, critical and creative thinking in students as well as in teachers, this develops lifelong, able teachers and students.

Grift and Major (2013:9) provide insight into how to build metacognitive capacities in students, as they believe that these capacities will prepare the students' and optimise learning experiences. This means that quality metacognition will be of huge value to both teaching and learning competence developed through portfolio completion as these skills will be utilised and improved during the process.

The teacher plans, organises and guides, whereas the learner is an interactive player who owns the success of the learning. Successful learning is of a high quality, and it develops metacognitive strategies, which results in a high degree of student satisfaction. Learners become self-regulated, critical and creative thinkers, whose development is ongoing and lifelong. A teaching portfolio helps

the teacher as a strategy to plan, organise and document the advancement and ongoing achievement of the learners.

#### **2.5.4 The learning**

In Chapter 1, the meaning of learning was presented as a change in mental processes that creates the capacity to demonstrate a change in behaviour (Eggen, 2013:292). The point of going to school is to learn: when learning becomes the centre of the classroom, then the student must work as hard as the teacher. This means that the learner's mind is engaged and not just passively exposed to information. The classroom is like a laboratory of learning: the teacher provides the tools and materials to enable learning and supports the learners by helping them to develop a plan for learning (Bergmann & Sams, 2012:63). In this context, learning is interactive, because both the learners and the teacher's role are to be active participants in a process. This means that the teacher also becomes an active learner.

These definitions suggest that learning is gaining knowledge and skill through study or experience or by being taught. It also means to become aware of something through receiving information or by observation (Waite, 2012:412). In the context of the lecturer it is that knowledge and skill gained by the lecturer which enhances his/her teaching and learning and which from that point becomes part of their schema. In the context of the student it is the new learning added to the student's existing frame of reference and possibly the same learning as that which is being taught by the lecturer or teacher.

In this study, learning is seen from a constructivist perspective, which is concerned with how we come to know what we know. The researcher draws on the work of both Piaget and Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1978:n.p.) to inform an understanding which conceptualises learning as a constructive process. Constructivists believe that knowledge and learning is constructed internally by the learner in the following ways: by engaging with the subject; by having concrete experiences; by showing curiosity; by discovering; and, even by playing. This active involvement leads learners to form their own ideas, which results in discussions, and the sharing of ideas. It also encourages the learners to think seriously and carefully about what they have learnt. The goal is to become a critical thinker about the subject which has been learnt (Naude & Meyer, 2014:5).

Piaget uses a constructivist model, which focuses on individuals who interact with the world. Lecturers and teachers do just this on an everyday basis. They construct their knowledge as they actively engage with the environment (when they lecture and teach everyday), manipulate physical objects and make sense of how these concepts work (Naude & Meyer, 2014:14). In this study, learning mimics childhood learning, as learning happens by doing. The resulting cognitive

development transitions through hierarchical levels, with each level a prerequisite for the next, more complex level.

Piaget referred to knowledge acquisition as being based on three types of interrelated knowledge which form internal ideas that lead to conceptual understanding (Naude & Meyer, 2014:7-8). The three types of knowledge are: Physical knowledge, which is the type of knowledge gained through the senses and by manipulating objects, through play, engagement, concrete experiences and discovery. Teaching is engagement and the process of completing a teaching portfolio is based on an account of these daily teaching engagements and experiences in the classroom and lecture halls (Naude & Meyer, 2014:7). Then there is social knowledge which Piaget considered to be the type of knowledge which refers to the personal experience gained in everyday life. This knowledge is learnt from others through observation or as the result of explanations by knowledgeable people, peers and teachers. The process of doing a teaching portfolio involves lecturers interacting with knowledgeable peers, who help them by doing peer reviews, and with the planning and setting of goals (Naude & Meyer, 2014:7). It also encompasses the learning of a student teacher during their teaching practical experience. Lastly, Piaget listed conceptual knowledge as important, this is the type of knowledge that is internally constructed by the learners themselves. After acquiring knowledge, they can reflect upon what they know, verbalise their thinking, as well as tell others what they know, and document it. The learners need to have both physical knowledge as well as social knowledge in order to arrive at conceptual knowledge. Conceptual knowledge is never static; it will adapt and grow as experience is gained of a concept. In addition, conceptual knowledge is stored, but it can be retrieved when needed. This means that prior knowledge is used to explore new concepts and ideas. When applied to this study, the doing of a teaching portfolio is a practical activity based on experience and reflection, which results in growth. Both physical and social knowledge assist with the development of conceptual knowledge, which improves the quality of teaching and learning (Naude & Meyer, 2014:8).

Vygotsky's ideas were also central to the development of constructivism, but he used a social learning theory to explain it. While this explanation focused on the child, it emphasised how a teacher could be guided to understanding by the learner (Naude & Meyer, 2014:6). Vygotsky also believed that learning takes place on three levels. Firstly, learning occurs when learners interact with other people in their environment. Secondly, learning takes place when the learner interacts with more knowledgeable people; this guidance is hugely influential on our learning. Thirdly learning occurs between two borders. Vygotsky calls the distance between these two borders the zone of proximal development (ZPD), and this is the challenge of new learning (Naude & Meyer, 2014:6). This new learning is built onto existing learning, and it is scaffolded and supported to ensure meaningful, successful learning by the teacher and other significant people. The constructing of more complex knowledge is clear, as the process continuously challenges the person to understand information in progressively more complex and effective ways (Donald et al. 2010:57).



Donald et al. (2010:50) suggests that knowledge and understanding of the world is actively constructed through experience and interaction in the world. People are seen to create maps of knowledge by continually organising and reorganising experiences and information. When the information fits into a child's existing map, then assimilation occurs and the map is extended. When the information does not fit into an existing map, then accommodation occurs, and the map is reshaped to accommodate the new information. Assimilation and accommodation continuously interact to achieve equilibrium, and the result is learning.

A deeper understanding leads to growth. This means that a learning-orientated, developmental approach to teaching includes all the knowledge learnt during this journey. Darling-Hammond (2005:382) investigated this complexity, and her findings provided great insight into the types as well as variety of learning that happened while developing a portfolio.

Darling-Hammond (2005:382) finds evidence of the different types of knowledge, namely, "knowledge *for* practice, knowledge *in* practice and knowledge *of* practice." The first type describes the kind of knowledge teachers need *for* practice, such as, content of subject matter, theory of learning, and strategies for teaching and pedagogy. This knowledge is emphasised in teacher education and is knowledge that is transmitted from a teacher to a learner.

The second type of "knowledge is *in* practice" and this is knowledge typically seen in action and in reflections. Darling-Hammond (2005:382) believes that this is the knowledge that teachers need. For example, they need to observe, to reflect, to evaluate and to plan. Without this knowledge, it is difficult to action teaching as well as learning. This type of knowledge *in* practice is of particular interest to this study, because it emphasises that most of teachers' knowledge is practical, and it is acquired by reflecting on experience. A teacher's "knowledge *in* practice" can become another teacher's "knowledge *of* practice," for example, less experienced teachers learn from the example and actions of expert teachers, who model their knowledge and skill as they make choices and decisions. Darling-Hammond (2005:383) emphasise that there is a collective construction of knowledge when teachers learn from each other and this "knowledge *in* practice" emphasises the role of a teacher as a learner. This view is constructivist in the way, knowledge, growth and development are seen to be a result of the process of sharing the learning experience, where it impacts on the learner as well as the teacher. This resulting learning suggests the importance of ongoing inquiry by teachers in their own classrooms to address critical problems of practice and grow their competence. According to research, this is the problem that a teaching portfolio focuses on, namely, the construction of knowledge and skill through reflection, which leads to growth during the teaching process.

The third type of “knowledge is *of* practice,” which emphasises the relationship between knowledge, practice and the theoretical aspects of both. It requires that the knowledge teachers need to teach well is the result of systematic inquiry into teaching, the learners, learning, curriculum, schools and schooling. This “knowledge *of* practice” emphasises the relationship between knowledge and practice, with its emphasis on a teacher constructing both knowledge and learning. Inevitably, the result will be a process of growth (Darling-Hammond, 2005:383).

Darling-Hammond (2005:383) also suggests that teachers undertake an ongoing inquiry into their own classrooms to address problems of practice. This shows the teacher to be a lifelong learner, as well as a member of a professional community, who is focused upon continuous career development. If this deeper understanding results in knowledge *for, in and of* practice, then this conception of knowledge is valuable to this study. The two types of knowledge gained *in and of* practice are relevant and support Piaget and Vygotsky’s thinking, as well as being useful in interrogating the value of portfolios. These ideas assist in constructing the teachers’ knowledge and skills, and they add value to this exercise over a lifetime. By value, this means the importance or usefulness of something, and it also refers to the worth or the standard of the behaviour (Waite, 2012:816).

In using the three types of knowledge, teachers must support learners to become proficient which means that learners:

- Can understand what they are doing
- Can apply what they have learnt
- Can reason about what they have learnt
- Realise that they must engage actively with the learning
- Need to be confident in the understanding and use of their new learning (Department of Basic Education, 2009)

Teachers also need to encourage learners to reflect on what they are doing, to verbalise their thoughts and to interpret and understand the ideas of others (Naude & Meyer, 2014:9). Teaching portfolios are concerned with particular, practical experience as well as a general discussion and sharing of ideas. Pondering on how to grow one’s knowledge and skill is where the ZPD, or area of growth, is found. The goal of learning through a constructivist approach is to become a critical thinker (Naude & Meyer, 2014:5). This critical thinking, strategies and reflection are documented while doing a teaching portfolio, and evidence of the ZPD is shown in the identified and by the desired growth in the teaching portfolio. A constructivist approach is fundamental to education, and it requires active and practical learning which is created by the lecturers themselves. It lends itself to subjects that require practical application, such as science and mathematics, but by extension to all teaching subjects. By its nature, a teaching portfolio affects teachers’ attitude to learning in a positive way, because by applying it to their practice, it leads to feelings of achievement and success, and it also shows evidence of learning and knowledge (Toraman & Demir, 2016:1,16&17).

In line with Piaget's thoughts on learning, the Kolb model of experiential learning, which is described as a four-stage cycle that involves four learning modes, namely concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation (van Rensburg, 2009:181). This experiential learning is also constructivist. Weber (2014:84) looks at Kolb's adult learning model in more detail and explains that the word 'experience' derives from the Latin word 'esperientia', which means trial, proof and experimentation. This means that the way someone gains experience and learns effectively is by using information or knowledge from the real world, and with enough trial and error, anyone can learn anything. This is the reality of teaching and learning and it happens on a daily basis in the classroom, where experience is fine-tuned and adapted across time.

Research indicates that learning can take place on many levels and does so when the experience is rich and planned (Leone, 2013:1). These levels can be seen as formal, non-formal and/or informal:

- Formal learning is learning that is hierarchical, structured in chronologically graded education running from primary through to tertiary institutions
- Non-formal learning is learning that takes place through education organised for specific learners with specific objectives, but it is outside of the formal established system
- Informal learning is learning that allows people to acquire attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from their daily experience

Learning happens on these three levels for teachers as well as for learners. The teacher experiences personal growth while he/she plans and implements what is documented in the teaching portfolio, and while he/she is busy planning and implementing the learning for the learner. Darling-Hammond (2005:383) refers to this as learning for, in and of practice, but it is also constructivism, and it is an approach supported by a number of researchers (Naude & Meyer, 2014:6, Weber, 2014:84, Donald et al. 2015:57).

2010:80-83, Leone, 2013:1). Maxwell (2015:1) referred to it as the "growing of and stretching with one's full effort, to best become ones best" Maxwell also believed it takes part attitude and part strategy to achieve this. The growth and learning that results from doing a teaching portfolio is seen to be of this kind of value.

According to Eggen (2013:6), educational psychology is the academic discipline that studies human teaching and learning. This means that doing a teaching portfolio is educational psychology in action, which shows that it is a beneficial tool for growth and development in teaching and learning. Educational Psychology focuses on the professional knowledge and skills essential for teaching and learning to be effective, as does the doing of a teaching portfolio. A teaching portfolio provides the

what, where, how, who and when, the structure to the process as well as insight into a human mind and its functioning with respect to developing a strategy for teaching and learning.

### **2.5.5 The environment**

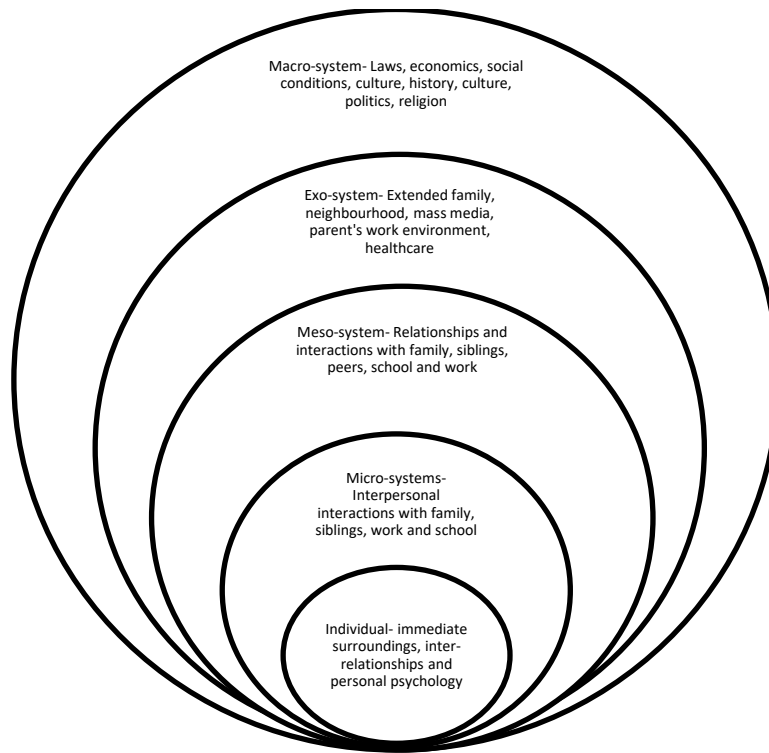
Bergman and Sams (2012:60) view a classroom in a new way as a laboratory of education, where students take responsibility for their own learning. Another approach suggests that educators call their classrooms learning spaces, which encourages learners to realise that the point of school is to learn, and not to be taught (Bergmann & Sams, 2012:64). Both these approaches require learners to be interactive in order to function in this space.

According to Waite (2012:237), the environment is seen in a holistic, global context, with a complex interplay between a variety of factors where learning takes place.

The physical environment of the class can have a positive or a negative impact on learning. Depending on how learners perceive the environment, it affects their attitude towards learning. The classroom is the meeting point for students and teachers and it is where teaching and learning take place. This is the space where students acquire relevant knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and competencies that they need to live usefully in a society (Asiyai, n.d:716).

In a similar way to Waite (2012:237) above, Eggen (2013:67) used Bronfenbrenner's model, which is depicted in Figure 2.3. It encompasses a complex, holistic, multiple and varied departure point to understand the learning environment, and it consists of the following:

- The macrosystem includes the social conditions, law, politics, economics, history, culture and religion.
- The exosystem which includes the influences of parents' work, extended family, society, neighbourhoods, mass media, healthcare, the school.
- The mesosystem which consists of the family, peers, school and neighbourhood.
- The microsystem consists of the immediate surroundings of the individualal person.



**Figure 2.3: Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model (adapted by the researcher for use in this research) Source: Ashiabi and O'Neal (2015:30)**

Taylor and Trumpower (2014:3) found that the following factors were important to make an environment conducive to learning. There needs to be an atmosphere where students feel connected to each other and to the educator. In addition, the environment requires mutual respect and a positive, enthusiastic, motivating attitude towards the learning, the environment and the happenings of each day. Finally, there needs to be meaningful individual and group work, where learners develop competence, so that learners understand the value of reaching their short and long-term goals.

Grift and Major (2013:9) outline key strategies for effective learning environments, such as useful classroom discussions, activities and learning tasks which elicit evidence of learning. Learning must take place in a context of self-assessment, reflection, feedback and students need to be engaged in the process.

Grift and Major (2013:53) mention that the results of this environment will lead to deeper levels of learning, which will be evident by:

- Students being clear on what and why they are learning
- High student engagement
- An emphasis on effort rather than ability
- Powerful learning relationships between teachers and students
- Time given to reflect and set goals

- Students who are able to discuss their learning
- Teachers who trust their students to self-assess and to give feedback
- Self-assessment strategies such as learning continuums, learning maps and reflection tools
- Students making decisions about their learning
- Focus on collaborative goal setting
- Learning growth for all students

Bergmann and Sams (2012:62) believe that differentiation between students is important, because the teacher must interact regularly with students and they must know them well. This allows the teacher to modify constantly students' expectations as they mature and grow. Each student must receive guidance towards a desired end in a meaningful way.

The environment in this research is seen in a holistic, global context. This includes the many factors that interact with one another in a learning situation and the dynamics of how this changes over time. Each learning situation is unique, and the educator needs to note, consider and accommodate these variables to ensure successful learning. Experience will help the teacher master this skill.

The environment is the glue that forms a context for learning and teaching, and teaching portfolios are completed within a unique learning context. These experiences serve to create an educator's current frame of reference. It is from this perspective that each educator answers the questions in the personal interview. Although the participants are asked the same set of questions, their answers about completing a teaching portfolio will vary, because of their different personal experiences.

### **2.5.6 The ambience of the learning environment**

Ambience refers to the character and atmosphere of a place, and in this context it refers to a learning environment. Synonyms for ambience are the impression, tenor or the nature of something; the spirit, quality, character or mood also aptly describe this word (Waite, 2012:20,702&753).

Ambience is the result of all these aspects of the environment together, and it is what the people 'feel' or experience about an environment. While this may appear to be an abstract concept, it impacts greatly on the psyche and the motivation of the individual learners and lecturers. Ambience also impacts on the teachers and learners' physical bodies, because it affects their attitude towards being in an environment and wanting to learn and/or teach to the best of their ability.

There is little research on the effect of ambience on the learning environment. The physical features of the learning environment are mistakenly seen to determine ambience, however, they form only a part of the sum total of ambience. Some research has indicated that ambience is improved in flexible

learning spaces, as these spaces had a positive impact on how students felt towards learning. The ambience improved students' sense of emotional wellbeing by making them feel happy, calm and motivated in their class. In turn, this improved their attitudes towards learning (Kariippanon, Cliff, Lancaster, Okely & Parrish, 2017:11).

Doing a teaching portfolio supports freedom and flexibility: it allows for a dedicated space to consider constructively many features of the environment or a combination of aspects that create a complex teaching and learning environment. But it also allows the teacher to ignore any number of them too.

## **2.6 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has created a clear understanding of what a teaching portfolio is, and what researchers believe its value to be. It explored the roles of andragogy, reflection, critical review, constructivism, metacognition, motivation and self-actualisation, which all form part of the process of completing a teaching portfolio. Research showed that the development of metacognitive skills is of great value during the process of doing a teaching portfolio. The combined skillset, which was presented in a synopsis in Table 2.1, is important as it shows what research has indicated are the valuable results of doing a teaching portfolio.

Furthermore, research helped to investigate different views on various aspects of the complex context in which teaching and learning took place. It was necessary to understand more fully the roles of the teacher, the learners, and the learning environment as well as how each learning encounter evolves in a unique set of circumstances. This provides the context for the completion of a teaching portfolio. It is also important to understand how this context impacts on the quality and outcome of learning.

This study needs to confirm whether or not the process of doing a teaching portfolio delivers in practice on the affordances documented by the research reviewed in this chapter. To investigate further, educators were personally interviewed to obtain their perspectives on their experiences of doing a teaching portfolio in a rich learning environment, and the findings are documented in Chapter 4.

However, Chapter 3 will focus on the nature of the research itself, the research design, the ethics, the sampling strategies and the tools chosen to use in the implementation of the research design.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to clarify the details of the research design chosen for this study. A detailed description follows: the research approach and design; details of the sample; the methodology including data collection, interpretation and analysis; as well as the ethical measures. An overview of the research is provided in Table 3.1:

**Table 3.1: Summary of the Research Design and Methodology**

<b>Research approach:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Qualitative research</li></ul>
<b>Research design:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Phenomenology</li></ul>
<b>Data collection instruments:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Personal semi-structured interviews:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ 8 Lecturers</li></ul></li><li>• Open-ended questions:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ 1 Manager of the tertiary institution</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Research sub-aims:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To explore the lecturers' perceptions on completing a teaching portfolio.</li><li>• To investigate the lecturers' perceived value of reflection.</li><li>• To determine whether the portfolio is considered a valuable lifelong tool for professional growth and development.</li><li>• To determine whether completing a portfolio is perceived to have a positive impact on students' success.</li></ul>
<b>Data analysis technique:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)</li></ul>

#### 3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The research approach chosen for this study is a qualitative approach. Phenomenology as a design suited this study well because it helped to explore and describe perspectives through using hermeneutics. Hermeneutics (Maree, 2007:101) typically involves personal, in-depth interviews with relevant people who are knowledgeable about the subject of a teaching portfolio, these real time accounts (Marshall & Rossman, 2016:118) provided a combined understanding of the topic. The data was analysed and interpreted to provide the lecturers' opinions in as accurate and an ethical manner as possible.



### 3.2.1 Research Approach

Qualitative research provides no single answer to a question, as it is all about individual meaning and perception. This research topic is affected by the context, values, subjectivity and reflexivity, and a qualitative methodology helps us to understand it (Braun & Clarke, 2013:19). Maree (2007:55) believes that the world consists of people who have various beliefs, values, assumptions and attitudes. By using qualitative research, it allows the researcher to ask the participants questions, which leads to a complex and detailed understanding of an issue by exploring people's experiences and their constructions of reality. Concepts are altered, because it allows for engagement and a deeper understanding of issues. The results of this process add to the existing body of knowledge and understanding in the field. This investigation into educators' perceptions, regarding the completing of a teaching portfolio, is about discovering "what they now know". It becomes an account of the lecturers' lived experiences, which is typically qualitative in nature. Furthermore, this qualitative aspect is reflected in their spoken words, which enhances both the concept and understanding of teaching as well as portfolio development (Maree, 2007:71).

The data has been gathered from the lecturers' own words, their perceptions, values and experiences. All of this data is subjective and it reflects their personal opinions at a certain time (Braun & Clarke, 2013:21). This research study aims to understand the meaning of the lecturers' words that describe their perceptions regarding a teaching portfolio. There are multiple versions of a lived reality, even for the same person at different times, and these will be linked to the context in which they occur. Ultimately, the final study will contain a joint version of the "voices of the participants" (Braun & Clark, 2013:6). In this case, the lecturers' voices run through the analysis of the data, and they will be interpreted in order to answer the research questions.

Qualitative research has the ability to reorganise cognitive understanding about the concept being researched. Cognitive transformation is also known as constructivism, which is the building of concepts in the thinking structures of the brain. This process happens, to some extent, when qualitative research succeeds. As a result, qualitative research has introduced many ideas that help to build knowledge. Meaning is built systematically and through constructivism answers to the research questions are gathered from the data obtained from the interviews, understanding is deepened through answering the research questions. Qualitative techniques rely specifically on constructivism to accomplish the research objectives of which data remains the prerequisite (Mitchell, 2011:4&5). A qualitative research methodology is best suited to study a central phenomenon, which is a key idea being investigated. In this study, it is the educators' perspective on the experience of doing a teaching portfolio. A qualitative research approach proved to be the most suitable, because it focuses on "seeing the world through the eyes of the participant's/lecturer's" (Maree, 2007:50 & 51).

Qualitative research is an accepted methodology for finding answers to questions. In this context, the question concerns the value of teaching portfolios and the answers may make a significant contribution to theory and practice, especially in the field of teaching (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:320). Finding answers to the research questions is seen as a process of inquiry, where a researcher develops a complex, holistic picture, analyses words and reports on different views. In this study, the inquiry is into lecturers' perceptions of a teaching portfolio in a natural setting. In this instance a qualitative research approach proved the most suitable because it focusses on seeing the world through the eyes of the participant (Creswell, 2003, n.p.), the lecturer. Creswell (2007:41) believes it allows for a complex and detailed understanding of an issue. Conceptual studies as a type of qualitative research design critically engage the understanding of a concept by an individual and aims to add to the existing body of knowledge and understanding of it.

The approach of a qualitative study in most cases is constructivist, as it is built up of "multiple meanings from different individuals" (Maree, 2007:265). This allows the researcher to make sense of emerging patterns of meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2013:10), which is based on the participants' views. Some researchers see qualitative research as a form of experiential research, which is driven by the desire to know people's personal perspectives and meanings. This provides a rich and deep understanding of the topic being studied (Braun & Clarke, 2013:21-24). Qualitative research allows for a data collection method that resembles real life and is closer to a natural context. It provides narrow, yet rich data with detailed descriptions (Braun & Clarke, 2013:4-6). Qualitative data requires a framework to find patterns, and this is achieved by using a thematic approach (Braun & Clarke, 2013:174). The patterns show the educators' similar and different views as to the value of completing a teaching portfolio. These patterns are informed by the topics covered in the various interviews, which are based on the research questions (Addendum H).

Braun and Clarke (2013:19&37) state that qualitative research is also about critical reflection, which is a subjective and reflective process. It is relevant to a specific context and it has other important fundamentals:

- It does not provide a single answer
- It can be experiential or critical
- It uses all sorts of data
- It involves "thinking qualitatively"

Qualitative ideas and approaches have been part of psychology for years (Braun & Clarke, 2013:7). As this research is investigating the lecturers' thinking and reporting on their views about doing a teaching portfolio, this shows that a qualitative method is an ideal approach for this study.

In addition, the researcher's subjectivity is also accommodated by this qualitative approach, as it is difficult to eliminate one's own biases in this type of data gathering process. This means that the researcher is involved and immersed in the changing real-life context of this study (Maree, 2007:79).

### **3.2.2 Phenomenological design using Hermeneutics**

The qualitative design is phenomenological and it uses an approach informed by hermeneutics. Phenomenological approaches help with guidelines to "explore, describe and analyse the meaning of individual lived experience [including] how the person perceives it, describes it, feels about it, judges it, remembers it, make sense of it and talks about it with others" (Marshall & Rossman, 2016:17). A phenomenological approach assists in describing the meaning of a teaching portfolio from the perspective of several lecturers, as it reports on their lived experiences. It selects what they report to be common, and this assists in "creating a universal essence of their combined experience" (Maree, 2007:59).

#### **3.2.2.1 *Hermeneutics***

Hermeneutics typically entails using a sample of participants, conducting several long, in-depth interviews, and all of individuals must have experienced the phenomenon of interest. Analysis proceeds from the assumption that there is an essence to an experience that is shared with others who also have experienced the phenomenon, in this case experienced lecturers who have completed a teaching portfolio. The unique experiences are analysed of those participating in the study, then the experience of those who have had similar experiences are analysed, these are compared and combined in order to find the essence of the experience. The result should be a real time account of life as it is lived (Marshall & Rossman, 2016:118). Maree (2007:101) believes hermeneutics will provide a richer and deeper understanding by uncovering hidden and implied meaning which will add to deeper meaning gathered from the data. In this research, from the transcripts of the interviews with the lecturers. Maree (2007:59) reports that experiences are understood from within and this means from a person's subjective reality. From the reported, combined experiences, the researcher interprets and mediates them, while maintaining a strong relationship to the topic of inquiry.

Hermeneutics is evident in lecturers' reports on the experience of completing a teaching portfolio, because it consists of the bare testimony to their "perceived personal value during the process" (Braun & Clarke, 2013:24). The inquiry cycle is ideal for looking at the process of doing a teaching portfolio, because the inquiry cycle explores how there is a "continual cycle that all educators spiral through, throughout a lecturer/teacher's professional life time, this necessitates the continual and relentless raising of questions, systematic study of them, and subsequent improvement to practice" (Dana, 2013:82). The resulting inquiry continues to be a powerful force and source of knowledge of

the self and others throughout a professional lifetime and “just like a circle, it has no end” (Dana, 2013:83). The data was obtained from educators at a tertiary institution that use teaching portfolios as part of the lecturers’ development plan.

### **3.3 POPULATION, SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**

The population for this study is a body of lecturers who have previously completed a teaching portfolio and who work at a particular institution in Johannesburg. This choice was convenient for the researcher because she too works at the institution and the lecturers are known to be required to complete teaching portfolios as part of their development plan. As in any qualitative study, the data from a semi-structured interview can be rich, so a small, purposive, convenient sample was selected at this particular institution.

Maree, (2007:79) provides the following guidelines with regards the sampling used in this study. Purposive sampling was chosen, this means that the participants were selected based on a defining characteristic that makes them holders of the data needed for this study. This ensures the richest possible source of information to answer the research question. The ideal sample for this research study should be convenient and purposive, and the data needs to be collected in an interactive way. The following data collection strategies were chosen: the primary source of data is from a semi-structured, phenomenological, individualised interview; the secondary source of data is from a document analysis. Purposive sampling goes beyond selecting the participants, as it also involves the setting, incident, event and activity, which supports the sample as shown in this study.

The process of selecting lecturers to participate was initiated by establishing contact with them, in order to create a relationship with the sample group. This particular sample was selected on the basis that the participants were considered to be a good source of information for this research study. The main requirements for this study were that they are qualified, experienced lecturers who have completed a teaching portfolio. Both verbal as well as written detail was supplied by the researcher to the participants. This created an understanding of the reason for as well as the process of the research study. The participants’ role in the research and the researcher’s expectation for the members of the sample group were clearly communicated. Next, the participants were asked if they were willing to take part in this research on a voluntary basis. All ethical issues regarding this research were clearly communicated, both verbally and in writing. The content of the Informational Brief (Addendum F) was guided by the detail suggested by Braun & Clarke, (2013:62).

The following issues were addressed:

- The research was undertaken on a voluntary basis by willing participants
- No harm was intended by any of the questions
- Confidentiality was upheld throughout the research process
- Reporting of information was done anonymously
- The sample was selected from a group of purposively selected, qualified educators, who have previously completed a teaching portfolio
- Personal and subjective views and opinions were valued
- A brief look at the research question and the reason for the research was given to the lecturers who were interviewed
- It was possible for a lecturer to withdrawal from this research at any time
- The researcher's contact details were provided to address lecturers' possible questions or queries before or after the interview

### **3.3.1 Sampling Strategies**

As a qualitative study, it needed a small sample of lecturers to obtain rich and meaningful data. It was also a specific group, which met the requirement that they could give an account of having completed a teaching portfolio.

#### **3.3.1.1 Sample Selection**

Convenience sampling means that the sample is easily available, but this sample may not necessarily represent all lecturers. This form of sampling is ideal for this participant-based research; because it is "accessible to the researcher" (Braun & Clarke 2013:57). The sample comprised lecturers who have previously completed a teaching portfolio, and this makes it a convenience sample. However, there is limited scope to generalise based on a convenience sampling, and if generalisations are made, then they must be done with caution (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:137).

Purposive sampling is when the group is targeted with one purpose in mind (Maree, 2007:178), and the results promise to generate insight and depth of understanding about the research topic. It involves selecting participants on the basis that they will be able to provide information-rich data on the topic, which will be analysed (Braun & Clarke, 2013:56). In this study, the purposive group is specific and limited in number. It was chosen from a small group of lecturers who have previously completed a teaching portfolio at a tertiary institution in Johannesburg.

Snowballing is also known as the chain of referral, where participants who have already been approached refer the researcher to others who could potentially contribute to the study (Maree,

2007:80). This normally happens in an interconnected group, and the start of finding participants is to make contact with one or more persons (Maree, 2007:177). Snowballing forms part of convenience sampling and it is a common technique. This involves researcher building the sample through his/her own social networks, as well as those of the other participants. The most common form of snowballing was utilised, as the researcher asked the participants if they knew lecturers who might provide valuable information about completing teaching portfolios (Braun & Clarke 2013:57). The researcher applied this method successfully and quickly had a sample of lecturer's who had agreed to take part in the research.

The researcher firstly issued an invitation to potential participants to take part in this research, and explained that this research is phenomenological and based on educators' experiences. This sample included educators who were from any field of study, including education, media, public relations, information technology or commerce at a tertiary institution in Johannesburg. These lecturers, who agreed to be participants, took part voluntarily in this research during their own personal time. They provided an account of their own subjective and personal knowledge about their teaching and learning experiences. In particular, they gave an account of their experience of completing a teaching portfolio, which they created as part of their personal development plan while working as lecturers at a tertiary institution in Johannesburg. This context is part of the private education sector, and the lecturers lectured on courses which provide National Qualification Framework level 7 qualifications. There was a cross section of lecturers at the institution, as they were from different cultural, social, racial and gender groups. The lecturers are qualified to lecture, as they have the required tertiary, academic qualifications. They also have previous knowledge and experience of teaching and lecturing, as well as the completing of a teaching portfolio.

This shows that the researcher used inclusive criteria to select the participants for this study, who were also good sources of information (Braun & Clarke, 2013:56).

### *3.3.1.2 Sample Size*

According to Braun & Clarke (2013:45), "it is ideal that the size of the sample is small when it comes to face-to-face interviews." This allows a researcher to focus on the experience of the individual participants and to collect information-rich data. The sample size selected for this study was eight educators. They were asked to participate and were briefed (Addendum F), then they were asked to voluntarily agree to take part in the research by signing a consent form (Addendum G).

### **3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The paradigm and main features of constructivism suggest that knowledge is actively constructed within a context (Crotty, 2012:1). A constructivist perspective encompasses the process that a lecturer follows while doing a teaching portfolio, as knowledge is planned and then constructed step-by-step. Chapter 2 provided details about the construction of knowledge during the process of completing a teaching portfolio. Furthermore, knowledge of a teaching portfolio is continuously being constructed through the process of doing this research, which shows its value.

A qualitative approach assists the development of knowledge and understanding, as both are generated by looking at the meanings found within this small sample in a particular context (Braun & Clarke, 2013:33). The teaching portfolio portrays the main features of constructivism, which suggests that knowledge is actively constructed on an ongoing basis (Crotty, 2012:1).

#### **3.4.1 Data Collection method**

This research required an interactional mode of inquiry, which was suited for this study, because it allowed for a phenomenological approach. This approach suggested that in-depth interviews would supply the data needed for this study.

Marshall and Rossman, (2016:153) suggest that phenomenological interviewing is a specific type of in-depth interviewing. It is grounded in the philosophical tradition of phenomenology, which is the study of lived experiences and how these experiences are understood. Phenomenology rests on the assumption that there is an essence to these shared experiences that can be identified and recorded. The purpose of this type of interviewing is to describe the meaning of a concept or phenomenon that is shared by several individuals. In this study, the phenomenon is the completion of a teaching portfolio.

##### **3.4.1.1 Individual interview**

An interview is essentially an informal oral questionnaire that also allows for interaction between individuals, although verbal and non-verbal behaviour are also important. The interviews take time and bias must be limited (McMillan, 2010:206). Maree (2007:87) states that a semi-structured interview allows data to emerge from a set of planned questions. This allows the interviewer to pose questions that will encourage answers that will enhance understanding (Maree, 2007:89). This research used semi-structured interviews as the primary tool for data collection. Semi-structured interviews are ideal for qualitative research, because they offer a flexible and relaxed approach to an interview, and they allow lecturers time to reflect on their experiences from a personal perspective. A semi-structured interview allows an individual to respond to an open-ended question by providing in-depth and detailed responses (McMillan, 2010:206). The interview guide is found in

Addendum H, and the researcher encouraged elaboration and clarification of the answers to these questions to provide validity to the data being collected (Braun & Clarke, 2016:78).

Phenomenological in-depth interviews are composed of an inquiry into past or present experiences. But they can also join up the two narratives of past and present to describe the individuals' complete and essential experience of the phenomenon concerned. This study draws on the latter approach, by inquiring into the educator's total experience of completing a teaching portfolio. It also requires the researcher to "epoché or examine his/her own description of the phenomenon" before the interview and to separate it from the lecturers' experience (Marshall & Rossman, 2016:153). This enables the researcher to gain insight into his/her own opinions concerning the teaching portfolio or phenomenon so that the researcher's preconceptions do not influence the interpretation of the data gathered in the interview. The data will be analysed and only that relevant to themes and which can answer the research questions will be used (Marshall & Rossman, 2016:153).

The last part of the process involves inferred meaning, which is achieved by exploring all possible meanings and divergent perspectives within the answers. The end result is a combined description of the essence of the phenomenon, which is relevant to answering the research questions (Marshall & Rossman, 2016:153).

As is common with a phenomenological approach, the sample is small and consists of a total of eight individual, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. The interviews took place at a convenient time and venue for the participants and interviewer. These interviews were guided by the interview schedule (Addendum H). The interviews were recorded and transcribed at a later date. These recordings assisted in producing valid and reliable data, as the noting of verbatim expressions helped to limit bias and helped to create trustworthy data. The researcher noted non-verbal cues, and they added meaning to what the respondents said.

Braun and Clarke (2013:77) also confirm that a qualitative interview is an ideal choice of data instrument, as it is a professional conversation. The goal is to encourage participants to talk about their experiences and perspectives. It is planned to capture the essence of a topic through a schedule of open-ended questions, yet it is flexible and responsive to the participants' answers. The interview must capture the range and diversity of all the participants' responses as well as enhance understanding of the topic.



### **3.4.2 Procedure of Data Collection**

For the purpose of this study, the research followed a structured procedure to collect data. Firstly, permission was requested from and granted by UNISA's Ethics Committee (Addendum D). Then permission was requested in writing (Addendum A, B & C) from the Principal, the Senior Deputy Principal for Operations, and the Head of Department at the College of Education in Johannesburg. Finally, the Vice Principal forwarded the request to conduct research to the tertiary institution's national body, and permission was granted by a panel led by the National Research and Development Manager (Addendum E).

Eight participants were approached to determine this study's feasibility and their interest in assisting with this research. Once the study's viability was established, then the participants were provided with a written Information Brief (Addendum F). Participants were given assurances that their participation was voluntary, and that their confidentiality and anonymity would be respected and upheld. The issue of non-payment for participation was emphasised as well as the qualitative nature of the research. Participant Consent Forms (Addendum G), were read and signed before any interviews were planned with the participants. Interviews were scheduled after clearance from UNISA's Ethics Committee was granted, and also once permission was given by the tertiary institution's relevant management to conduct the research.

Interviews took place at convenient times and place as per appointment. Permission was sought from the participants to record the interview at the beginning (Participant Consent Form: Addendum G). Recordings were made to allow for the accurate transcription of data (Maree, 2007:89). The data was then transcribed verbatim and all elements of the conversation were noted. This included laughter and gestures, as they provided added meaning (Maree, 2007:104).

Interviews were then coded and analysed, and the coding consisted of dividing the transcript into meaningful units (Maree, 2007:105). In this study, it was the data that would answer the research questions. Patterns emanated from the analysis and interpretation of the data in relation to the research questions, and these were used to create themes. The transcriptions of the interviews are provided on the flash drive attached to this study.

After the interview, the researcher was available for ongoing contact and support: this included email contact, direct contact and telephonic contact throughout the research process with all the participants

### 3.4.3 Data Interpretation

This research study was done within a phenomenological context, which entailed exploring experience and people's meaning of it. To support this approach, the data was collected qualitatively, and the method used to analyse the data tried to stay as close as possible to the participants' account of their experiences. This meant that accuracy was essential (Braun & Clarke, 2013:141).

Using hermeneutics allows the search for implied, hidden and apparent meanings. This process allows for layers of meaning to evolve and unfold as a deeper meaning is sought in the contextually rich data. This allows for understanding of the bigger picture to develop (Maree, 2007:101). Analysis must be done in detail and the nuances and intricacies retained, as they influence meaning and deepen understanding (Maree, 2007:108). The process of "looking for the lessons learned" suggests that making sense of the data in relation to the research questions also requires using "interpretation based on inference, hunches, insights and intuition" (de Vos et al. 2014:416).

Data is recorded in a systematic way in an appropriate real-life setting (de Vos et al. 2014:404). In this context, the setting is the tertiary education environment, mediated through an individual interview. The template for the interview schedule acts as a guideline for transcribing the recorded interviews in order to find themes to answer the research questions (de Vos et al. 2014:404). It is important to work inductively and to allow the emergence of categories or themes in a dynamic way (Maree, 2007: 109).

#### 3.4.3.1 Data analysis

Homogeneity of the group can be defined by the demographics of the group. In this study, the factors most related to homogeneity were the lecturer's qualifications and experiences of completing a teaching portfolio. Lecturer's will account for their perspective of completing a teaching portfolio in an individual and personal way. Comparative designs compare these different experiences of the same phenomenon (Braun & Clarke, 2013:181 & 182).

Data or the rough interview material was analysed in order to make sense of it. de Vos et al. (2014: 398) emphasise that there were decisions to make as to which data was relevant or irrelevant in helping to answer the research questions. The research is qualitative and this allows features to be sorted, grouped and ordered to reduce the material into manageable pieces and then reassemble it in order to answer the research questions (de Vos et al. 2014:399).

The strengths of the IPA method of analysis are that the results will be clear and concise, as there will be individual accounts of how the educators experienced the phenomenon. However, the weaknesses of this approach are as follows: the sample is small; the views pertain to the questions

asked in the interview; the participant will then have the freedom to select what to report on and how, similarly the lecturer will choose what to select to analyse in order to answer the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2013:183).

#### *3.4.3.2 Data Analysis Technique*

For the purpose of this study the researcher required information-rich data pertaining to teaching portfolios, and the portfolios from the participants' tertiary institution were considered to be suitable. Permission was obtained from the Teaching and Learning Manager to obtain and view the institution guidelines for a teaching portfolio, which is provided for educators at this tertiary institution. By making a comparison between these guidelines and what was found in the research concerning the content and format of teaching portfolios in Chapter 2, this formed the basis for reflection on the various components in a teaching portfolio. This focus was guided by the value of a teaching portfolio to assist with lecturers' growth and development, which linked directly to the participants' experience of this process.

The guidelines for these portfolios were given to lecturers when they started their career at the tertiary institution, as they were required to create and complete a teaching portfolio. Lecturers attended a workshop which was used to inform them about suggested ways to complete a teaching portfolio. Portfolios were reviewed annually and updated by individuals each semester and in conjunction with a peer review process that included planning, goal setting, feedback and a discussion session.

#### *3.4.3.3 Coding of Data*

Coding is dividing the transcript into "meaningful units" (Maree, 2007:105), and in this study this refers to the themes which form the building blocks that relates to answering the stated research questions. The researcher generated groups of concepts that would be useful in providing a deeper understanding of each of these research questions (de Vos et al. 2014: 412).

The relevant data was coded and throughout the process it was recorded anonymously. Each participant received a unique coding number during the transcription process (Braun & Clarke, 2013:141). A pre-analytical process refined the data and selected what was potentially relevant to answering the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2013:206-207). The responses were used verbatim to retain the authentic personalised responses and the depth of detail. Relevant data pertaining to the participants' demographics was also captured (Braun & Clarke, 2013:141).

The data was analysed according to IPA. This approach was ideal, because it helped to analyse and explore the meaning of the responses, which were collected during the individual interviews. These responses were concerned with experience, subjective understandings and perceptions (Braun &

Clarke, 2013:50), which went beyond the obvious to a deeper level. IPA is concerned with how people make sense of their individual lived experiences, so it allowed for an analysis of individual cases to generate themes across a small group of participants. This approach is based on how people perceive and talk about their experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2013:174-175). It is best suited to open-ended type of questions, it sees the person as a reflective person who can interpret their own experience after reflecting on it in order to make sense of it. It acknowledges that a researcher cannot access the participants' world directly, so the researcher must interpret as best he/she can to make sense of the participants' world. This means that there is a dual interpretative process that occurs, which is referred to as "double hermeneutics" (hermeneutics refers to the theory of interpretation, so a double interpretation). The researcher must interpret their own understanding as well as that of the lecturer's, in this case and then stay as close as possible to the lecturer's account of their experiences and represent it in as true a way as possible (Braun & Clarke, 2013:181). An IPA analysis helped to construct a good overview of the educators' perspectives based on their experiences of completing a teaching portfolio. The researcher also evaluated her own perspective regarding a teaching portfolio, as she too had previously completed one and worked in the same teaching and learning environment as the participants.

The search is for what the data really means, which is an active analytical approach that helps us to understand the words from the participants' point of view. In turn, this helps us to understand the various ways that different participants make sense of their experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2013:205). The transcription, analysis and coding allowed the researcher time to become immersed in the details generated by the data while gathering the key concepts (de Vos et al, 2014:408).

#### *3.4.3.4 Identifying Patterns*

Themes are organised by analysing the data that reoccurs into related categories and then assigning them a label. In order to answer the research questions, this may require "cutting, sorting and changing categories to refine them to accommodate all the data collected" (Maree, 2007:108).

It is important to look for relevant patterns; these are ideas that recur across a dataset, where frequency and meaning indicate their significance. The codes form patterns and the patterns form themes, so the analysis becomes deeper. Themes capture something important about the data, which is related to the research questions, and themes are central to organising a concept and creating an understanding (Braun & Clarke, 2013:223-224, 233 & 237).

#### *3.4.3.5 Final findings based on the methodological study*

Maree (2007:113) states that the aim of research is to draw a joint finding and conclusion, based on the data. In this study, it refers to all of the lecturers' combined perceptions about the value of doing

a teaching portfolio. All conclusions must be substantiated with reference to the data obtained in the individual interviews with the lecturers. New insights must be noted along with supporting evidence. No generalisations to a broader audience may be made, but only a bounded conclusion in relation to a particular group of lecturers in a teaching context at a specific time and place are valid. The report must be structured, organised and reported on according to these themes or categories (de Vos et al, 2014:428), which is presented in the research findings in Chapter 5.

#### *3.4.3.5.1 Interpretation within a context*

The data was gathered in a certain learning context, which was based on the particular past learning experiences of a certain group of lecturers. To gather the data, the researcher interacted with these participants on a one-to-one level (Braun & Clark, 2013:6). This context was analysed in Chapter 2 of this study and it is considered relevant to all interpretations of these findings. The lecturer, the learner, the learning as well as the environment created a unique context for the lecturers' experience of doing a portfolio, and this is expressed by the participants' interpretations regarding the task (Braun & Clarke, 2013:21).

#### *3.4.3.5.2 Crystallisation of findings*

The qualitative approach set out to penetrate the lecturers' understanding regarding the completion of their teaching portfolios. From a constructivist perspective, this approach entails that the researcher's conception of teaching portfolios will change during the course of this research. The lecturers' reality about their own practice was constructed through searching for answers to the research questions: the lecturers came to their interviews with multiple realities, unique insights and perspectives that they accounted for during the interviews. The analysis and dialogue caused a deeper understanding to emerge during the interviews, and the researcher gained a better conception of the lecturers' reality while gathering the data. This reality was crystallised from the data findings (Creswell et al. 2007:81).

### **3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The ethical standards required by UNISA were specified in UNISA Policy on research ethics, the most important standards related to those of privacy and confidentiality which included the importance of the protection of data as well as the protection from any harm of the participants. The institution in Johannesburg granted permission to do the research based on the condition that their procedures and standards were met. This included ensuring the anonymity of the institution and the participants as well as obtaining a signed written consent form from each the lecturer who took part in the research. These standards were adhered to and additionally the study was conducted with the following general standards in mind:

### **3.5.1 Validity and reliability**

Trustworthiness or the goodness of qualitative research is measured according to the following criteria: “reliability, validity, objectivity and generalisability” (Marshall & Rossman, 2016:43). According to Maree, (2007:80) trustworthiness is strengthened by the multiple method of data collection, in this case the semi-structured interview as well as the document analysis (Maree, 2007:114). This qualitative study has set out to probe deeper human understanding of the phenomenon of a teaching portfolio, there will evolve multiple understandings of different perspectives accounted for by unique realities of different lecturer's. What will emerge here are the described findings from the data analysis which create a reality and it is this pattern that adds to the trustworthiness of this research through the readers deeper and more complex understanding of teaching portfolio's (Maree, 2007:81). Creswell and Creswell (2018:199) emphasise the importance of accuracy in determining validity, accuracy is threefold in that it is from the researcher, the participant and the reader's perspective. This speaks of authenticity in all aspects of the research. Some of the ways this was established is the checking of the transcripts of the interviews for accuracy and authenticity, rich and real accounts of shared experiences were reported using the lecturer's exact wording, the checking of the data to ensure that the themes were well analysed, justified and reported on. Tabulated formats as well as accounts of findings were recorded, cross references were also provided with relevant themes. Accounts were provided as to the researchers links to the tertiary institution as well as experience with a teaching portfolio. Negative experiences with regard to teaching portfolio's were also accounted for in the findings to add to the real accounts of the lecturer's (Creswell 2018:199-201). Every effort was made to ensure that the qualitative results reflect the participants' true opinions regarding the completion of a teaching portfolio. This study aimed to report on the participants' authentic accounts of their personal experiences when the data was collated.

### **3.5.2 Ethical considerations / Credibility of study**

The ethical considerations cover a number of aspects. Braun and Clarke (2013: 61) state unequivocally that “research should be of the highest ethical standard.” Ethics covers the relationship with participants, with academic communities and with the wider world where research is conducted. In a qualitative study of this nature, the researcher has an ethical responsibility to the participants in the study as well as to the discipline, in this case in the human sciences and education faculty, to report on this research in an accurate way (de Vos et al. 2014:114).

The ethics of this research are judged on the basis of process, that is, how this research was conducted. An ethical code provides universal principles that guide the research, but these are applied and interpreted in different ways, at different times and in different places. The core ethical

requirements that were applied in this research are based on the four principles of “respect, competence, responsibility and integrity” (Braun & Clark, 2013:62).

Ethical clearance was granted by UNISA (Ref:2017/10/184623010/32/MC) (Addendum D) to do the research and the required stipulated code of ethics was adhered to during this research. Permission was granted by the tertiary institution in Johannesburg to interview the participants and their conditions were adhered to during the research process (Addendum E).

### **3.5.3 Informed Consent**

Confidentiality and anonymity are maintained to protect all the participants and their identity (Maree, 2007:115). Respect for the participants, in this case the lecturer’s, ensures that we do not use the people who participate in our studies as a means to an end and that we always respect their privacy, their anonymity and their right to participate or not (Marshall & Rossman, 2016:51). In this study it is done by ensuring that the participants freely consented to participate in the research. Furthermore, the researcher did whatever is reasonably possible to ensure that participants were not harmed in any way by participating in this study.

The participants were also informed as to how the sample was selected. Assurances were provided concerning voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity of identity and non-payment for participation was also emphasised. The participants were informed that the study is based on qualitative research, therefore their own personal opinions and subjective views were relevant to this research and that there were no right and wrong answers to the interview questions (Braun & Clarke, 2013:6 & 21). An informed declaration of consent (Addendum G) was read and signed by each participant. This consent assured understanding as well as knowledge of risk, because it implied choice as it allowed the lecturer an opportunity to withdraw from the research, which is considered an example of active and informed consent (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:118).

Through the Informational Brief (Addendum F) and the informed consent form (Addendum G), the researcher ensured that the participants were fully informed about the purpose of the study. It also clarified that their participation was voluntary and that they understood the extent of their commitment to the study as well as that there was minimal risk associated in participating (Marshall & Rossman, 2016:52).

### **3.5.4 Voluntary Practice**

Any opinions the participants shared were done so on a voluntary basis, as the “act initiated by one’s own actions” (Creswell, Ebersöhn, Eloff, Ferreira, Ivankova, Jansen, Nieuwenhuis, Pietersen, Plano Clark, & van der Westhuizen, 2007:32). Answers were subjective, and participants were given a

choice as to whether to participate or not in the research as well as whether they chose to answer any question during the interview.

### **3.5.5 Privacy**

Privacy is ensured by anonymity, confidentiality and an appropriate storage of data (McMillan, 2010:121). Privacy and confidentiality were maintained and upheld during the research process, as all personal and subjective opinions were recorded anonymously and reported through the coding process (Braun & Clarke, 2013:62-63). Participants' characteristics, responses, behaviour and other information were restricted to access by the researcher and her supervisor. Data storage is addressed in section 3.6 below.

### **3.5.6 Full Disclosure**

The researcher is required to be open, honest and to provide full disclosure to all participants regarding all aspects and information about the research (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:117). This was adhered to by providing an Informational Brief up front, both verbally and in writing, which allowed clarity concerning the reason for the research as well as its procedure. This brief also served to clarify the lecturers' role in the research as well as the procedure on how the participant can withdraw from the research, if the need arose.

### **3.5.7 Description of Risk/ Freedom from harm**

Preventing and minimising harm or risk is essential to the participants (McMillan & Shumacher, 2010:119). The answers to the questions are the opinion of a willing and non-vulnerable adult participant. However, this opinion is personal and it is deemed confidential by the respondent, which means that the researcher will not disclose it. Confidentiality is ensured through anonymity. The data collected was not seen to be of a sensitive nature and it therefore proposed no immediate risk to the participants. No harm was intended to anyone at any stage of the research (Braun & Clarke, 2013:62-63). The data collected was that of subjective opinions on work-related matters, which were based on the lecturers' teaching and learning as well as their experience of completing a teaching portfolio. It was shared by the participant on a voluntary basis, and it was kept confidential and recorded anonymously for the sole purpose of this study.

Precautions were implemented to protect the participants from any risk or harm. The condition that any participant could withdraw from the study at any time during the process was contained in the declaration of consent. The only stipulation was that the researcher be informed of the participant's decision. Furthermore, the brief supplied the contact details of the researcher, so that if the participants required any further clarification or information, then they could contact the researcher.



If a debriefing for any of the participants was necessary in the future, then this would occur on request. These precautions upheld the ethical principles of competence and responsibility for this research. Special precautions were taken to ensure that no plagiarism or misrepresentation of the responses of the participants occurred, and that the work of others was acknowledged (Braun & Clarke, 2013:62 & 63).

Adverse effects are highly unlikely, because the participants were well informed both verbally and via the Informational Brief (Addendum F) that they could withdraw at any time if they experience any adverse effects or inconvenience during or as a result of this study.

### **3.6 DATA STORAGE**

The process of data storage commenced from the time data was collected until the completion of data analysis, and the data files were safely secured. Analysis was computerised and secured on a private computer. All data will be kept for five years on a computer which has a security code, and the data will only be used for this study. None of the data collected would be of a sensitive nature and it should not be harmful to any individual.

### **3.7 IMPLEMENTATION OF PROSPECTIVE FUTURE VALUE OF THE RESEARCH**

If the teaching portfolio, in the lecturers' opinion be valuable to teaching and learning, then this could be indicative that further investigation might be helpful to determine whether the benefit of doing a portfolio could be promoted in other contexts, for example, the Department of Education. A study of this nature would only be implemented and form part of subsequent research should it be deemed valuable and of interest to a broader teaching community.

### **3.8 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the method and execution process of the research study was discussed. This included qualitative based instruments used for data collection and the relevant strategies required to gather the data. The method of analysis of the data was clarified and a detailed discussion about important ethical concerns followed.

The following Chapter 4 will deal with the strategy of processing, analysing and interpreting the data, with the intention of using it to help answer the research questions.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 describes, summarises, analyses and interprets the results of the data obtained during the semi-structured interviews with the lecturers and the documentary analysis of the portfolio guidelines, which the institution provided for each lecturer. The researcher presents the most significant parts of the interview transcriptions in order to answer the research questions. The complete transcriptions of the interviews are stored by the researcher and supervisor for safekeeping on laptops that are password protected.

#### 4.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The selection of participants was based on the following criteria. Firstly, the lecturers needed to be knowledgeable and experienced about the doing of a teaching portfolio. The sample was a purposive sample, whereby the experienced lecturers formed a valuable source of data for this study (Maree, 2007:79). Secondly, the sample was a convenience sample, because it refers to a sample which is accessible to the researcher, who also lectured at the same institution in Johannesburg at the time of the research (Braun & Clarke 2013:57&177). All lecturers, who were considered to be potential participants, were briefed verbally as well as supplied with a written brief detailing their role in this research. They were allowed to ask any questions to deepen their understanding of the research and then they had to volunteer to be a participant by signing a consent form, acknowledging this voluntary participation. The table below (Table 4.1) provides a short summary of the final eight participants' details:

**Table 4.1: Biographic information of lecturers**

BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION	
Number of participants	8
Experience in lecturing at a tertiary institution	2 – 26 years
Gender of participants	Females = 7 Male = 1
Qualifications of participants	3 = Qualification at Master's level 5 = Qualification at Honours' level

All eight lecturers are employed at the tertiary institution in Johannesburg as independent contractors. Their lecturing experience ranged from two to twenty-six years in a variety of institutions, in secondary as well as tertiary education. The sample thus crossed a range of gender, age and race. All the lecturers had experience in completing a portfolio at the institution at which the research took place and all the lecturers had updated their portfolio between two and eight times across the years.

### **4.3 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

Maree (2007:87&89) states that a semi-structured interview is used to gather emerging data from a set of predetermined questions and this process allows for probing of the perception, views, opinions and statements. The aim of the semi-structured interviews which took place as part of this research were to answer the research questions which were focused on obtaining insight into a lecturer's perception of the value of a teaching portfolio. Semi-structured interviews allowed the lecturers to respond to open-ended questions according to their respective views (McMillan, 2010: 206). This generated rich, varied and a great quantity of data from the participants. The raw data, in the form of the recording and transcription of the interviews, were saved and are in the researcher and supervisor's safekeeping.

### **4.4 CATEGORISATION OF THE RAW DATA INTO THEMES**

The data was used collectively wherever possible, and it was based on all the lecturers' perceptions gathered during the interviews. However, the lecturers' individual views were used verbatim to retain an authentic, personalised view. Each lecturer was assigned a number between 1 and 8. The pre-selected data was coded so that each lecturer was ensured of anonymity. Through a pre-analytical process, the data from the transcripts was refined and the researcher selected only the data that was potentially relevant to answering this study's research questions. The data was then mapped and perceptions chunked so that recurring patterns could be identified. Once the patterns were identified, these were used to identify the themes, which focused on the answering of the main research question provided in Chapter 1.

### **4.5 OVERVIEW OF EMERGING THEMES**

Table 4.2 displays an overview of the seven emerging themes and the respective subthemes from the data collected from the interviews with the lecturer. Table J (Addendum J) provides a comprehensive and detailed record of Table 4.2 with cross-references, for ease of reading. Section 4.6 of this chapter discusses these themes linking data details from the interviews.

**Table 4.2: Overview of the themes and subthemes (cf.section 4.6)**

<b>THEME 1: VALUE OF A TEACHING PORTFOLIO: Growth, development and competence</b>
• <b>Knowledge</b> (cf. section 4.6.1.1)
• <b>Skill</b> (cf. section 4.6.1.2)
• <b>Planning and decision-making</b> (cf. section 4.6.1.3)
• <b>Changes in lecturing</b> (cf. section 4.6.1.4)
<b>THEME 2: VALUE OF A TEACHING PORTFOLIO: Related to higher-order lecturing skill and deep-thinkingability</b> (cf section 4.6.2)
• Reflection(cf. section 4.6.2.1)
• Self- Actualisation (cf. section 4.6.2.2)
• Self-confidence, self-concept, self-image (cf. section 4.6.2.3)
• Metacognition (cf. section 4.6.2.4)
•
• Insightful (cf. section 4.6.2.5)
• Intuition (cf. section 4.6.2.6)
• Maximising potential (cf.section 4.6.2.7)
<b>THEME 3: FACTORS AFFECTING VALUE OF A TEACHING PORTFOLIO</b> (cf.section 4.6.3)
• Regularity of update of teaching portfolio (cf. section 4.6.3.1)
• Optional lifetime development tool (cf.section 4.6.3.2)
• Teaching portfolio as a personal plan (cf. section 4.6.3.3)
• Self-directed growth (cf. section 4.6.3.4)
<b>THEME 4: FACTORS RESULTING IN REDUCED VALUE</b> (cf. section 4.6.4)
<b>THEME 5: IMPACT/EVIDENCE OF THE BENEFIT ON THE LEARNER'S LEARNING/RESULTS</b> section 4.6.5)
<b>THEME 6: LECTURERS' IMPORTANT POINTS CONCERNING A TEACHING PORTFOLIO</b> (cf. section 4.6.6)
<b>THEME 7: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVED VALUE FOR COMPLETING A TEACHING PORTFOLIO</b> (cf. section 4.6.7)

## **4.6 DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS**

The researcher presents a number of main themes together with the subthemes, generated from the data gathered in the interviews, in order to address the research questions and the specific aims of this study stated in Chapter 1. These answers are therefore based on the lecturers' opinions, beliefs and perceptions relating to their perceived value of a teaching portfolio.

### **4.6.1 THEME 1: Value related to growth, development and competence**

According to the literature study, the teaching portfolio is found by Campbell et al. (2014:3) to be a carefully selected and unabridged version of a document that portrays individuality, autonomy, professional growth and competence within one's teaching. Lecturers (2 and 3) were in agreement that a portfolio causes positive change through a process where a lecturer takes stock, documents, records existing knowledge and skills, as well as plans to grow further knowledge, skill and

competence on both a career and personal level. It is also evident from the data collected that many of the lecturers perceive a teaching portfolio to instigate this positive change and growth, because five of the eight lecturers reported on this (Lecturers 1,2,3,5 & 8). Lecturer 6 found that the advantage of doing a teaching portfolio is that, *“it did force us to write things down, to document and ... to take stock of what happened in the year.”* Taking stock allows for clearer understanding and this causes growth, development and competence to result. It also had the positive advantage of building relationships: Lecturers reported to have found that her growth as a result of doing a teaching portfolio created *“a deeper quality relationship (with the students).”* A few lecturers noted and reported this growth on a career level (Lecturers 1, 2, 3 & 5) and some at a personal level (Lecturer 2). The advantages of this growth were seen in the following, *“it can open doors to other opportunities”* (Lecturer 1) and *“if you don’t do it, you never going to get better and I think you [will then] come into a comfort zone”* (Lecturer 1)."

#### 4.6.1.1 Knowledge / thinking

A teaching portfolio allows a lecturer to demonstrate their knowledge and skill (Frunzeanu, 2014:117). It keeps your teaching relevant, validates what you do, deepens your understanding and is constructed and reconstructed (Kecik et al. 2012:175). Lecturers reveal the same idea in the interviews, as a teaching portfolio has a huge impact in knowledge acquisition in pedagogy, strategies, skills, content, problem solving and metacognition. The literature aligns with the utterances of the participants where seven out of eight lecturers (Lecturers 1,3,4,5,6,7 & 8) recognised that portfolios validate good lecturer practice regarding teaching and learning. More importantly the portfolio is viewed as a tool for growth and development akin to Frunzeanu (2014:117). Furthermore, gaining knowledge and understanding through the analysis that goes into doing a teaching portfolio is described as follows by Lecturer 7, *“[the teaching portfolio] played a role in gaining knowledge about my process [planning and presenting of lectures].”* It also played a role in gaining *“understanding [of] why you have done something,”* so that you can link it to *“what I [the lecturer] have achieved [that is your outcomes].”* Lecturer 4 summed up the process well by stating, *“you learn... to structure your thoughts.”* The lecturers acknowledged the impact on growth on their thinking, understanding, linking and structuring of thought as a result of doing a teaching portfolio. Its value is seen to advance professional development.

#### 4.6.1.2 Skills

Knowledge converts to skills, because it allows one to identify areas of improvement, adds value to teaching and moves a teacher towards excellence (Shulman, 1978:9-15) (cf. Chapter 1, section 1.2.2). Lecturer 8 emphasised that knowledge and skills are interrelated, as skills can only be executed based on the knowledge and understanding that is available to the person. The majority of the participants (Lecturers 1,3,4,5,6,7 & 8) perceived the value of a portfolio in that it foregrounded

the skills required and emphasised the importance of solid content disciplinary knowledge on their part, which is similar to the findings in the literature review. Lecturing focusses on the application of knowledge and skills as well as developing a problem-solving ability, which are a part of everyday teaching (Graham, 2017:n.p.). Lecturer 3 agreed with this idea when reporting that, *"I have become better at certain things ... I reflected on what I would do ... that obviously does equate to skill. I think I am a better lecturer for the knowledge I have gained about teaching and learning through the teaching portfolio experience."* Excellence may be evident in skills, as more knowledge is converted into more skills. This happens as the learning becomes growth and action orientated, and it will then add value to teaching, as it moves an "educator towards excellence" (Meeus et al. 2009:407).

In addition, the lecturers stated that the focus on the development of skills included planning as this influenced the execution of teaching in the class on a daily basis. The teaching portfolio provided *"evidence in changes in skill"* (Lecturer 7). It allowed one to look for innovative *"new ways of teaching"* (Lecturer 1), to look for new approaches and identify new strategies (Lecturers 1 & 7), especially ones that work). Strategies that have been successful will be kept and re-used and those which were not must be changed (Lecturer 7). Lecturer 4 believed that the role or skill one needs, must be geared to become a *"facilitator of learning to guide interactive learning and lots of discussion."* Even though participants had varying views, they shared a common belief that a portfolio did improve the skills needed to deliver content knowledge. Lecturers with this kind of skill would certainly be an asset to any institution.

Factors such as reflection affected the quality of the planning of the teaching and this in turn affected the development of skills. The data indicated that many of the participants agreed that planning and reflection are important aspects of both teaching and learning. A teaching portfolio helped with planning and required reflection for the planning to be executed. Lecturer 8 believed that a portfolio helps *"grow your knowledge and skill, [because] they are interrelated."* Lecturers (1,3 & 8) agreed that reflection was important for this growth. Lecturer 1 claimed that *"reflection I think is an important part of skill, reflecting on your practice can teach you skills that maybe you need to hone in on or that you are not doing quite correctly, it can help embellish your teaching."* Lecturer 3 stated that doing a teaching portfolio *"allows reflection on the process of teaching with the intention of making improvements."*

Thus from the participants' responses, there is evidence that a portfolio develops skills which convert to competence. However, It appears that this is enhanced when other methods are incorporated such as the following suggestion, to incorporate a peer reviewer: *"I think definitely skill and competence [are developed by a teaching portfolio] but again with someone who I considered to be my peer and more knowledgeable [is part of the skill development process]"* (Lecturer 7).

Lecturer 6 could not definitely link the changes in lecturing (skill) to the portfolio and warned, *“I look at new ways, because I want to be innovative, I get bored, I want to find something different, I want to find a different approach, ... it’s not linked to your portfolio but to a style of teaching. I would do it whether we had the portfolio or not.”*

#### 4.6.1.3 Planning and decision making

Planning is a conscious and active practice of goal-orientated and structured thinking and it is therefore a process which has to be systematically learnt across time. It is a powerful tool, which is used by teachers to successfully come to grips with the complexity of the teaching situation (Meeus et al. 2009:408). Half of the lecturers (lecturers 1,3,7,8) reported that doing a teaching portfolio has had a positive impact on their planning and decision making with respect to their teaching.

According to Lecturer 1, teaching portfolios help to plan pedagogy to meet the needs of unique classes because every single class is diverse, every single class presents the lecturers with different ideas, challenges, spontaneity and selecting certain relevant methods is part of the success of your lecturing. Lecturer 3 stated, *“I would definitely say that the process has impacted on the way that I think and plan my class and make improvements around that”* Part of the planning is the preparation for doing a teaching portfolio, because it continuously and consciously makes the lecturer aware to collect material and evidence for the records in your teaching portfolio (Lecturers 1&3). This detail of the planning required by a teaching portfolio was reported by Lecturer 8 who found value in that, *“I now plan my work... my preparation is on a deeper level.”* The success is evident in the class results and in the learning which is goal-orientated and structured (cf. section 4.6.1.3).

Furthermore, decision making is part of planning when completing a teaching portfolio, Lecturer 1 stated the following, *“it certainly does play a role in decision making because as I said, every single class is diverse [so the decisions will be different].”* Lecturer 7 agreed and indicated, *“I consciously make the decision ... there is a reason [for every decision].”* It is the intentional planning in order to reach specific outcomes, which indicates the essential, valuable aspect of planning for efficient lecturing. This planning is documented and written down in a structured way when a lecturer completes a teaching portfolio.

#### 4.6.1.4 Changes in lecturing

For the lecturer, the point of this process of completing a teaching portfolio is in the learning, not the teaching (Meeus et al. 2009: 405-407). Most lecturers reported that doing a teaching portfolio resulted in a positive impact on their lecturing practice (Lecturers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7). Lecturer 2 emphasised that *“my teaching is changing big time and it changes all the time ... it [the teaching portfolio] identifies the areas of growth.”* Lecturer 8 believes that *“my preparation is on a deeper*

level,” because of a teaching portfolio. The teaching portfolio requires that you document your teaching philosophy and this is important because “*your philosophy is your way of being*” (Lecturer 1). It is valuable to know, understand and analyse your values, attitudes and teaching style as a lecturer, because this is part of your philosophy which informs your approach to lecturing. This process allows for deep thinking through reflection and it leads to change, “*the ways in which you deliver the content ... I think that is what makes it dynamic ... students’ change and classes change*” (Lecturer 1). This causes a growth in your strengths, identifies areas of weakness and then affords an opportunity for growth. Lecturer 3 added that “*one of the things that I consistently think about when I do my teaching portfolio are often the things that aren’t working for me. Then I will implement a strategy ... try something new*”. This process instils confidence and ensures a lecturer’s competence and success. The documentation involved in completing a portfolio causes you to think, to commit and to be able to refer back to it, by pondering on its value and efficiency on a regular basis.

One of the changes in lecturing as a result of doing a teaching portfolio was identified: it builds confidence in knowledge, skill and ability (Lecturers 3 & 7). This confidence is built by acquiring an increased degree of knowledge, skill and competence while searching for evidence to put into a teaching portfolio. This process validates the decisions made on how to guide a particular group of students through their learning (Lecturer 3). Confidence in building competence is bound to impact positively on self-confidence, self-image and self-concept (cf. section 4.6.2.3).

However, lecturers’ perceptions vary, which has an impact on their views of the value of a teaching portfolio. Lecturer 4 reported that the change was definite, but only in the area of technology. While the use of technology was required by the institution, it was recognised as being beneficial to the students too. Another perspective from Lecturer 5 was that the changes in my lecturing style “*wasn’t my personal natural growth, but [what was] required of me*”. Lecturer 6 reported that he/she experienced, “*none what so ever*” changes in lecturing. This indicated that in some aspects the skills developed are institution driven rather than individual lecturers using their own initiative to improve their teaching and learning.

#### 4.6.1.5 Electronic portfolio

For the sake of clarity, it is important to mention that there were a variety of types (formats) of portfolios (Meeus, et al., 2009:401). An e-portfolio uses electronic media to store artefacts that are collected and reflected on by the teacher (Frunzeanu, 2014:118). Lecturer 4 commented on the advantage of electronic portfolios: “*Using more ... technology to make work easier, so maybe that’s a good thing*”.



The lecturers reported that the tertiary institution used in this research required recently that portfolios be done electronically and on-line, which adds value as it introduces the skills of electronic presentation and modern-day convenience.

#### 4.6.2 THEME 2: Value related to higher-order lecturing skill and deep-thinking ability

Andragogy is about teaching adults: it is the practice, method and techniques used to move one towards independence and self-direction in acquiring learning (Pappas, 2013:n.p.) (cf. Chapter 1, section 1.1). Andragogy encompasses strategising, planning, learning and thinking at a deep and meaningful level to ensure growth, which should be part of a lecturer's daily task. In the interviews, the lecturers identified six deep-thinking lecturing skills that they confirmed developed as a result of doing a teaching portfolio. These skills are reflection, self-actualisation, self-confidence, self-concept, self-image, metacognition, insight, intuition and maximising one's potential as a lecturer.

Interrogation of one's own thought processes is referred to as "inquiry" by Earl and Timperley (2008:4), and it becomes a habit of the mind. Inquiry refers to an ongoing process of using evidence to make decisions, collect data and interpret evidence in ways that enhance and advance understanding. This supports the processes undertaken when doing a teaching portfolio and requires one to use metacognitive, higher-order and deep-thinking skills, which are the type mentioned by Earl and Timperley. In turn, this results in advanced lecturing skills and growing teacher competence. In the next section, the lecturers reports on the skills and thinking ability they developed as a result of doing a teaching portfolio:

##### 4.6.2.1 Reflection

According to Weber (2014:83), reflection is central to learning and this is not a new premise. Reflection is a crucial ingredient for learning and change (Weber, 2014:84). All eight lecturers (Lecturers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8) agreed that doing a teaching portfolio caused one to reflect and "*even taught one to reflect*" (Lecturer 1). They found that it created a space for: deep reflection; made conscious achievements; validated decisions; recognition of strengths and weaknesses; highlighted the need for changes; and, it caused growth and development. The lecturers reported the following ideas:

- **Change:** A teaching portfolio documents and puts down on paper important growth, development and change (Lecturers 1, 3 & 7). It "*sort of highlights and teaches you to reflect on your practice*" (Lecturer 1), and a teaching portfolio "*allows you to question your practice [lecturing]*" (Lecturer 6). Reflection resulted in change and a change in lecturing could "*make you a better practitioner*" (Lecturer 1). Change was also "*from year to year*", so it was a steady growth process (Lecturer 7), like "*taking stock*" (Lecturer 2), where the

intention was always improvement or change to “*embellish your lecturing*” (Lecturer 1). Reflection was on a number of different issues that instigated growth (Lecturers 1 & 7), and was particular to certain classes (Lecturer 7). The value of a teaching portfolio was shown by the following: “*I don’t think lecturers will reflect as much had they not had to submit a teaching portfolio*” (Lecturer 7).

- **Concepts to reflect on:** Lecturer 7 claimed that reflection is about “*the way that I taught certain concepts ... to understand why you have done something and I can link it to ... how to grow yourself ... and [understand] the changes I made [in lecturing] from one year to the next.*” Specific areas mentioned on how a teaching portfolio caused the lecturers to reflect were as follows: Lecturer 7 stated: “*New classes, new methods and new strategies ... how can I improve ... on questions you may ask, resources and your teaching style.*”. Lecturer 2 observed: “[It was] *the kind of student you have and how to improve practice*”, which led to her reflecting more. For Lecturer 4, it was about “*results*”, while Lecturers 1, 3 & 7 stated: “[It was about] *what did and did not work.*” Lecturer 8 found the benefit of reflection is in what it brings to the fore, namely, the lecturer’s “*strengths and weaknesses*”. Doing reflection prevents getting into a “*rut*” or risk “*doing the same thing over and over*” (Lecturers 1 & 3).
- **Confidence in ability:** Reflection resulted in a confidence in lecturing and the ability to link questions generated answers and led to success in teaching and learning (Lecturer 7). Lecturer 5 commented on reflection in this way: “*It kinda made the unconscious, conscious for me*”. A teaching portfolio validated success or failure, for the lecturers by linking the results to the process and justifying the effectiveness of teaching. It helped to check whether a lecturer has achieved particular goals. This was seen as a positive benefit to completing a portfolio.
- **Perception differs:** Lecturer 4 initially stated, “[*Reflection had*] *no benefit at all*,” then added “*what I benefitted the most would be the reflection, the results that I then achieved from that*”. Perception as to the value of reflection differed, because the question was raised as to whether reflection was a natural part of good daily teaching or not. Lecturer 6 questioned the understanding of reflection: “*What do we understand by reflection? Do you see it the same way as I do? I dunno! Because ... when I did that very first portfolio, I did reflect because I had to think of what I had or hadn’t done, what I could or couldn’t do and that did cause me to reflect. Do I automatically reflect as a professional? Always. I reflect, on a daily basis. At the end of the year ... what was good, what was bad and I document it [the lecturers’ analysis of teaching and learning]*”. It seems that the portfolio created a space to document reflections, which possibly caused deeper and more intentional, structured reflection.

#### 4.6.2.2 Self- actualisation

The understanding is that andragogy is about the practice, method and techniques which are used to teach adults as well as for them to learn. At the centre of this, is the belief that self-actualisation is the prime objective (Pappas, 2013:n.p.). Maslow sees self-actualisation as the highest human need, which is desired to maximise potential and growth (McLeod, 2017:n.p.). Five of the eight lecturers reported that they had experienced self-actualisation as a beneficial result of doing a teaching portfolio (Lecturers 1, 3, 5, 7 & 8), which showed that a teaching portfolio helped them to realise their true potential and to feel fulfilled (D'Souza & Gurin, 2016:1).

Self-actualisation was seen to be one of the benefits of doing a teaching portfolio: by creating connections through reflection; allowing opportunities to strategise; achieving growth in teaching and learning; validating the quality of the lecturing approach; deepening an understanding of the lecturer's role; achieving career goals; and, gaining financially. Five of the eight lecturers (Lecturers 1, 3, 5, 7 & 8) validated the literature by stating that they believed that by doing a teaching portfolio, they did self-actualise, and experienced growth at a deep, personal level. Lecturer 3 stated that she felt she could: *"Better the way I do things in the classroom... the activities that we have done ...and through some of the connections I have been able to make [between strategising her lecturing and the success she was able to attain thereafter]"*. Lecturer 5 added, *"it was a good activity to show how I had grown,"* by comparing past and current teaching recorded in the teaching portfolio, it showed *"how different that was ... I think maybe ... some self-actualisation [had] occurred]"*. Lecturer 8 focused on the difference a teaching portfolio has made to the depth of understanding of the lecturing role: *"It has helped to reach career goals"* and through career goals the lecturer believed she had experienced reaching *"self-actualising life-goals"*. This showed that doing a teaching portfolio has a definite, positive impact on improving self-actualisation.

Furthermore, doing a teaching portfolio had a positive result for Lecturer 7, as this lecturer received an academic award, which was a validation of the effort required to do a portfolio. Lecturer 7 stated the following: *"I always think there is more that you can know and do and your abilities can grow. I don't think for me you will ever be at the top of your game. There is always something that you don't know."* This statement affirmed the thinking that becoming a better lecturer was a journey, and a teaching portfolio was used to strategise ongoing development, which showed its high value for this lecturer.

By linking a teaching portfolio to a monetary value, it might ensure the quality of a lecturer's delivery. This lecturer suggested that a monetary reward validated a job well done. If doing a teaching portfolio caused a lecturer to do a better job, then it is a valuable exercise to do a teaching portfolio not only for a lecturer, but also for the institution employing the lecturer (Lecturer 1).

For some lecturers, the self-actualising value of a teaching portfolio was not evident. Lecturers 4 and 6 answered emphatically, *“No, not at all [it had no value to their self-actualisation]”*. This showed that the value of a teaching portfolio and its meaning are interpreted at a personal level.

#### 4.6.2.3 Self-confidence, self-concept, self-image

Success in learning comes from being empowered, and this provides confidence (Gharial et al. 2017:269). Many of the lecturers agreed with this statement and reported that they believed that a teaching portfolio served to bolster their confidence, especially the doing of the very first teaching portfolio. As active participants, the lecturers were motivated and inspired to learn further (Gharial et al. 2017:269). For five of the eight lecturers (Lecturers 1, 3, 6, 7 & 8), the interviews provided evidence that they had experienced a positive impact, especially in the growth of their self-confidence, as well as an improvement of their self-concept and self-image, as a result of doing a teaching portfolio. Success in learning comes from being empowered, and this in turn provides confidence to solve problems autonomously.

Furthermore, self-confidence, self-concept, and at times, self-image were bolstered during the process of doing a teaching portfolio through affirmation, although what constitutes affirmation might differ according to personal opinion. The teaching portfolio played a role in highlighting what was being done well (Lecturers 1 & 3), and this was achieved by reflection on lecturing as well as the documentation of the process. Lecturer 1 added that affirmation through a monetary reward also helped: *“I think emotionally it does have an effect as well, especially if it’s linked to the monetary aspect, if you get a better salary, it does help.”* Lecturer 7 found affirmation in the award which she received, and believed was a result of the portfolio development: *“I was able to reflect and it was my portfolio that put me forward for that lecturer’s award so that also makes ... you feel more confident, it is a validation that I am on the right track, I do know what I am doing.”* Affirmation impacted on the lecturers in a personal, positive way, because it developed confidence in themselves (Lecturers 1, 3, 6, 7 & 8). Lecturer 3 found that *“when you find out that you are doing things well, it does build your character, it makes you a more confident speaker, a more confident lecturer... seeing what your peers as well as your students have to say about you as a lecturer, can be quite useful in building self-confidence and self-image.”*

Lecturers 6 and 8 made a different point, as they focused on the value of the first teaching portfolio: *“You know, I would say initially it did impact my self-confidence and my self-concept, it actually bolstered my confidence. Because once I actually sat down and started to document what I could do, what I had done and what I thought should be done, I suddenly thought you’re bloody brilliant!”* Lecturer 8 confirmed this view: *“I remember the first time I started lecturing ... I was able to gain that self-confidence ... I grew in confidence ... my lecturing has improved and [my] self-image.”* This

showed the value of a teaching portfolio at an emotional level, and the likelihood of the lecturers repeating the process because of the rewards.

However, three lecturers believed that their self-confidence and self-image were good before they had to do a teaching portfolio, so they claimed that the process had no impact on them. Lecturer 2, 4 and 5 stated *“I have always been [felt] self-confident.”*

#### 4.6.2.4 Metacognition

GroiBbock, (2012:42) sees reflection on a metacognitive and higher-order thinking level: it is when one chooses to reflect on one's own cognitive processes, and view things from different angles to find new aspects and approaches. This process allows for change, which assists future learning. Metacognition was recognised by two of the eight lecturers (lecturers 1 & 6) as important. Lecturer 1 was of the following opinion: *“I think ... [on] the metacognition side of it, thinking of one's thinking is very important because I think sometimes we see things at surface level in our teaching and then we don't realise that we can deepen that and... deliver a better quality of product to the students.”* Lecturer 6 affirmed this view that a teaching portfolio caused *“introspection and this deep thinking is seen to affect not only your thinking but your method, style, delivery and hence enable a better quality of lecturing.”* According to Blumberg (2014:45), metacognition is an internal conversation about what you are doing. This enables monitoring progress as well as the level of mastery of your goals, which has a significant impact on the quality of lecturing.

#### 4.6.2.5 Insight

Higher-order lecturing skills are interrelated and seldom develop in isolation, because they are learned skills: when you get better at one, then you notice an improvement in the other; together they tend to drive growth.. They vary according to the depth with which they are applied at an individual level as well as at a task level. Most of these higher-order skills encompass reflection and this allows for a process of deep analysis that benefits both teaching and learning. Reflection is part of a metacognitive process and it results in growth, which by its nature helps to improve teaching, knowledge, skills and strategy. The types of personal growth, identified in the literature as the results of reflection are: “mindfulness; insightfulness particularly about oneself but also about one's own learning and then open-mindedness” (GroiBbock, 2012:42). With regards to insight, seven lecturers (Lecturers 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 & 8) agreed that the process of doing a teaching portfolio had provided insights in various ways.

GroiBbock (2012:42) reports that insight, particularly about oneself and one's learning, all impacts on a personal, individualised level and intentionally drives growth, which mirrored the participants' perceptions of the value of a portfolio. Lecturers agreed that a well-structured teaching portfolio that

was developmentally orientated allowed you: to learn; to structure your thoughts; to improve your skills; to grow as a person; to build confidence in your intuition; to build your self-confidence and image; to validate your decisions about your lecturing; to have insights that were positive and upbuilding; to set goals; to identify your strengths and weaknesses; to identify new areas about yourself; to identify areas for improvement, which were beneficial. The insights were especially significant the first time a teaching portfolio was done, and also at the end of the year to consolidate the experience.

The lecturers gave the following reasons in support of a teaching portfolio: Lecturer 1 stated that *"I think it is insightful, if you use it for your own reflection and if you are passionate about what you do, a teaching portfolio will be insightful into your own teaching."* Similarly, Lecturer 8 agreed that the insight could also be into *"me as a person, it improves me and improves my skill."* A teaching portfolio helped the lecturers to set goals, identified their strengths and weaknesses, identify areas of lecturing and to improve on teaching style (Lecturer 2). Moreover, Lecturer 7 argued that the resulting growth and improvement had had an impact on gaining *"confidence in [this] intuition"* The teaching portfolio necessitated reflection and according to Lecturer 3 allowed *"[me] to find out things about my teaching that maybe I didn't know existed ... I think the insight I have gained, does to a certain extent impact ... it builds self-confidence and self-image"* Lecturer 6 limited the view that a portfolio was insightful to *"the first time you do it and at the end of the year ... it [the teaching portfolio] could be seen as insightful."* The majority of lecturers reported that there were insights gained as a result of doing a teaching portfolio, which indicated that this was a valuable addition to their lecturing knowledge, skills and competence.

In contrast, Lecturer 4 initially stated that no insights were gained: *"I don't think that it was that insightful to me."* But then after a while stated the following *"the insight came from the assistance it provided in that you learn ... to structure your thoughts."* However, Lecturer 5 found the process beneficial and was adamant that, *"a teaching portfolio could be insightful ... but the experience of how it is structured [like a tick box] ... felt punitive instead of developmental."*

#### 4.6.2.6 Intuition

Tacit knowledge is knowledge that is understood or meant without being stated (Waite, 2012:742). It is the wisdom of intuition, which allows for effective, intuitive decision making. Lecturer 7 confirmed that a teaching portfolio developed intuition, as it indicated a deep metacognitive value, which was related to confidence. Furthermore, this confidence developed the ability to use this intuitive, gut 'feel' for a class effectively, and it built trust in developing a sense of what might or might not work for specific circumstances. It validated intuitive decisions - all by requiring one to search for evidence of the success of these decisions. Lecturer 7 experienced the following: *"I don't think the ability grew [but rather] the confidence in the ability grew ... I just know! ... I usually just go with my gut, so I*

*usually just get a sense of whether this is going to work ... I wouldn't have had the confidence unless I had ... done the reflection.*" Honing these skills is valuable to advance knowledge of and develop of lecturing skills.

#### 4.6.2.7 Maximising your potential

De Vos et al. (2014:310) believed that for any one person "reality is constructed personally and subjectively by that person." Each person's reality will influence what tasks and challenges I cause them to grow, and each person will embrace these challenges to a degree. Maxwell (2015:1) offered advice for lecturers, "To pursue your own best potential ... one must take on tasks that cause one to grow and stretch and pushes you to your full effort" (p. 1). The lecturers confirmed that a teaching portfolio developed them personally, strengthened their teaching, made them more aware and allowed them to understand what they could or could not do well. Lecturer 3 reported: *"I feel that it [the teaching portfolio] does strengthen my teaching ability, ... I would say that the teaching portfolio has allowed me to reach higher levels as a lecturer, that I probably wouldn't have done had I not reflected or done a teaching portfolio."* Another lecturer supported this view, and added: *"I think it does assist in developing your own personal growth and that in tune can open doors to other opportunities* (Lecturer 1). The detailed documentation required by a teaching portfolio showed the benefits of helping the lecturers to maximise their potential: As Lecturer 7 stated: *"[It] gives you something concrete to indicate that ...[I] took the time to actually invest the energy into it for myself, I could validate myself but it didn't come from an external source ... it was internal."* This process caused the lecturers to regularly re-evaluate their progress, their decisions, their goals and their strategies, which resulted in continual growth that helped them to maximise their potential., This equates to Maxwell's (2015:1) 'growing and stretching' process. Four of the eight lecturers (Lecturers 1, 3, 7 & 8) experienced the benefits of doing a teaching portfolio in these ways. Lecturer 8 confirmed that *"it [a teaching portfolio] is growing me... Yes ...it has maximised my potential."* Depending on how the portfolio is used, it will determine the outcome. If the portfolio is used to maximise a lecturer's potential by using it intentionally and strategically, then it will also maximise your potential as a lecturer, which makes doing a teaching portfolio a valuable task.

The participants made an important argument against the way a teaching portfolio was presented, as it was perceived as a mandatory, tick-box task. Lecturer 7 emphasised that a teaching portfolio has no developmental value if it is seen as a tick-box exercise, and the institution needed to motivate it as a requirement in a different manner. Lecturer 7 added: *"I think it needs to have a lot more reflection,... practical... it must be about how you have caused them (the students) to grow, ... there needs to be an investment on the part of the individual (the lecturer)"* Lecturer 6's view was that *"it mustn't be that I am ticking my box, I am going to take value from this cause, it is seen as a valuable exercise[to do a teaching portfolio]."* Lecturer 4 stated that it was necessary for the lecturers to challenge and apply themselves to *"put something new in"* for there to be an impact on potential. In

contrast, Lecturer 5 found that a teaching portfolio was not linked to maximising potential: *“I can’t say so, no. I would say so [only] if we are labelling potential as a tick box ... maybe I am a better lecturer because of those tick boxes ... but I don’t know if those things make you a better lecturer?”* Lecturer 6 believed that there were *“many other ways to attempt to maximise your potential,”* without using a teaching portfolio.

#### **4.6.3      THEME 3: Factors affecting value**

Campbell et.al. (2014:3) see the teaching portfolio as a carefully selected version of documents that portray a teacher’s individuality, autonomy, professional growth and competence. According to the lecturers, a teaching portfolio instigated positive growth, change and improvement. It helped them to take stock and it documented their growth and development of competent lecturing skills.

The lecturers reported on their experience of completing a teaching portfolio and each of the lecturers identified different, valuable aspects. In this section, the lecturers emphasised that the first portfolio was more valuable than any of the subsequent ones. However, some lecturers believed and provided evidence as to why the doing of a teaching portfolio was a valuable lifelong strategy. The other ideas that they considered to be important, which were not found in Themes 1 and 2 will be covered in the next sections.

##### **4.6.3.1    Regular updates**

According to Pappas (2013:n.p.), the lecturer implements learning strategies and then evaluates the outcomes, sets goals, paces and manages it all. This constructivist approach allows the learners to set their own goals and pace as well as manages their motivation and reflection for a teaching portfolio. The timing of doing a teaching portfolio is therefore an individual choice, which varied according to the lecturers’ values and goals. Both the literature as well as the lecturers emphasised the growth and development that a teaching portfolio encouraged.

During the interviews, four of the eight lecturers (Lecturers 2, 3, 4 & 8) stated the importance of a regular update to their teaching portfolio. However, the time frame varied, as some said it needed to be ongoing, while others said it needed to be done annually. Lecturer 1 believed the latter, because *“it is something that must be done on a yearly basis for the simple reason that your classes change, your experience change, new methodology come out”*. Similarly, Lecturer 2 believed that a teaching portfolio helped her to *“sum up the whole year ... lecturers are lifelong learners, they learn something every day.”* Lecturer 8 acknowledged that she consulted her teaching portfolio on a regular basis after lectures to check whether her teaching was in line with her stated goals. Another lecturer believed that reflecting regularly throughout the year was an ideal and so a teaching portfolio helped us (lecturers) to *“see on paper where our strengths and weaknesses lie”* (Lecturer 3). The lecturers



expressed the view that there was value in updating a teaching portfolio on a regular basis, but one of the problems was to make the time to do it. If the teaching portfolio was developmental, then it needed to be done continuously to track changes.

In contrast, some of the lecturers reported that doing a teaching portfolio was not helpful. Lecturer 4 was adamant that a lecturer's teaching philosophy would not change, although "*I will probably make small changes in the delivery, but I am not going to change my official philosophy.*" This view emphasised the importance of the first teaching portfolio which allowed a lecturer to know, state, analyse and apply their own teaching philosophy, which was seen as a valuable exercise.

#### 4.6.3.2 *Optional lifetime development tool*

In the review of the literature, some authors also stated that a teaching portfolio was advantageous for lifelong learning, and that it needed to be emphasised as part of teacher education. The focus must be on learning competency as much as on teaching competency, as students must be "trained to be a teacher as well as a learner because the one influences the other" (Meeus et al. 2009:402 & 405). In the interviews, one of the eight lecturers reported that he/she would use the teaching portfolio as a development tool for the rest of their life even if they were not required to do so by their employers: "*It helps, even if my employer doesn't require it of me, I can [because] is valuable*" (Lecturer 8).

Most of the lecturers agreed that a teaching portfolio was done because it was required by the institution, therefore it was not a decision made by choice. Despite some lecturers acknowledging the value of doing a teaching portfolio, it was not considered something that they would do voluntarily. The reasons were mainly due to the demands of the task on the lecturers' time and effort. These lecturers were also independent contractors, who were paid according to an hourly rate, and this meant that they considered themselves to have received little return for their efforts. This view is contrary to what the literature shows regarding the positive aspects of doing a teaching portfolio.

Lecturer 3 explained that despite acknowledging the value of a teaching portfolio, "*it's not something that I would document and keep track of if it was not pushed or encouraged or required by the institution.*" In addition, Lecturer 6 claimed: "*I certainly wouldn't willingly go ... do my actual portfolio, because I have nothing else to do.*" The value of doing a teaching portfolio was recognised by the lecturers, but as independent contractors, they battled with the implementation and motivation to do one as a lifelong tool.

There were suggestions that the lecturers could use a teaching portfolio for: record keeping of their career (Lecturer 5), to capture data (Lecturer 6); or, to present a CV in a creative manner (Lecturer 5). Another lecturer believed that it would suffice to revisit a teaching portfolio now and again: "*I will*

*need to look at it every three, four or five years ... I am not going to change my mind on how I am going to lecture and what I think*" (Lecturer 4). These views showed that personal values determined whether or not a teaching portfolio would be a lifelong tool. Unfortunately, this sample of lecturers showed that there was not much motivation to do a teaching portfolio on their own, but this must be distinguished from recognising its possible value.

#### 4.6.3.3 *Personal development plan*

Two of the eight lecturers agreed that they would do a teaching portfolio as a personal development plan (Lecturers 3 & 8), while another two lecturers were negative about doing one for this reason (Lecturers 1 & 6). They gave the following reasons: "*I don't think I will be compelled to do it as a personal plan ... [maybe] ... as a way of presenting yourself if you going to say apply for a new job and go for a promotion*" (Lecturer 1); or, "*to document a career*" (Lecturer 6). The rest of the lecturers did a teaching portfolio, because it was one of the requirements for working at the institution concerned.

For those lecturers who supported using a portfolio as a personal plan, this reinforced the findings from the literature. The lecturers were constantly aware of looking for evidence to use in a teaching portfolio and considered it an essential and valuable tool to use for the rest of their careers. Meeus et al. (2009:409) considered the drawing up a personal plan as a key element to show learning competency, as this monitors development and progress. Dajani (2014:60) sees portfolios as "living documents" that are dynamic and change over time, as the teacher critically reflects and evaluates their teaching. Teachers constantly revise and update their portfolios throughout their careers, because it describes their current strengths and accomplishments as well as indicates their areas of growth and development. All of these considerations result in improved teaching and quality education, and showed the lecturers' accountability for their own development, and to the institution that employed them as well as to the students at the institution to deliver an improved quality of lecturing. Lecturer 1 felt committed to doing a teaching portfolio in this way, as "*documenting it made me commit to it ... work on it systematically.*" Another lecturer believed it was an essential tool, because it is a skill that you will take with you for life "*regardless of how many years I have been a teacher*" (Lecturer 8).

#### 4.6.3.4 *Self-directed growth plan*

If a lecturer were to assess their own learning competency, then it might mean that they would need to assess their own capacity to execute self-regulated learning. A teaching portfolio could assist with this process by "highlighting planning, reflective capacity and teaching strengths and weaknesses" (Meeus et al. 2009: 405-407). On the issue of self-directed growth, four of the eight lecturers believed that they personally directed their growth as a result of doing a teaching portfolio (Lecturers 1, 2, 3

& 7). This view was supported by the findings in the literature, which showed that when the teaching portfolio is linked to a development plan, it causes the following: reflection; critique; metacognition; goal setting; evaluation; and, growth. It has the most meaning when personal feedback is supplied so the value of this experience depended on how the process of doing a portfolio was implemented.

- **Link it to a development plan:** Lecturer 1 made this important observation concerning portfolios: *"If a portfolio is linked to a development plan, then you are going to get that [personalised goal-directed growth] because you are continually having to look at your practice and reflect on your own practice, so it's like, it's called the art of noticing. ... if a portfolio isn't linked to some kind of self-directed activity then I think it is a waste because you just kind of producing a portfolio, producing a philosophy of your teaching without the metacognition, without that thinking about thinking".* Lecturer 2 agreed: *"It's got to be connected to a development plan ... because it allows me to critique my lecturing."* However, Lecturer 7 believed this process happened only while doing the first teaching portfolio, which had a higher value rather than subsequent ones. The depth of commitment depends on the lecturers' involvement in the process, because it has to have a deep personal value as only the lecturer him/herself will benefit from this process.
- **Importance of the plan not the portfolio:** For Lecturers 5 and 6, a teaching portfolio contributed nothing to their personal development, because they stated that a lecturer's growth and development could happen without doing a portfolio. Lecturer 3 reported that reflection was possible without a teaching portfolio or a written comment. However, reflection, planning and strategising enabled growth and change and remained important as a self-directed plan for lecturing: *"Even though I didn't have to do one [a teaching portfolio] I didn't do it on paper, I still did a level of self-reflection ... [however,] I think it is deeper when it's structured (Lecturer 3)".*

#### 4.6.4 THEME 4: Factors resulting in reduced value

Seven of the eight lecturers stated that doing a teaching portfolio was a negative exercise (Lecturers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7). Their reasons are listed here for interest and to indicate that there is a counter argument to the positive views regarding the doing of a teaching portfolio. There was information about negative issues, which warranted the creation of Theme 4. Some of the issues were personal, some concerned the specific tertiary institution, while others related to how the requirement of doing a teaching portfolio was implemented in a particular branch of the organisation.

A synopsis of the lecturers' views follows, however it must be noted that each of the lecturers were stating their personal views about negative perceptions of doing a teaching portfolio:

- **Part of a development plan:** The lecturers stated that the teaching portfolio should be

viewed as part of a developmental plan in order for it to provide value and enhanced meaning. It also had to be done voluntarily because if it was considered a compulsory activity, the reflective space would neither be embraced nor would it provide genuine insight into growth opportunities. For lecturers to do a teaching portfolio on an annual basis would not accommodate the changes that happen daily. A teaching portfolio might work better for a full-time employee who was building a career in one organisation. However, to improve the value of doing a teaching portfolio, the nature of the implementation must be developmental, and there needed to be guidance and support offered by an experienced and knowledgeable facilitator who was also a peer.

- The reasons for doing a teaching portfolio:** The lecturers said that in private higher education *“you are compelled to do one [a teaching portfolio] ... it becomes a mechanised thing that you do ... [you] do it because you have to (Lecturer 1).”* This reduced the value of doing a teaching portfolio as well as motivation. Lecturer 4 stated: *“I do it to get a contract, that removes the reflective space ... it did impact ... because I am forced to do certain things ... whether it changed a lot in terms of the way that I feel that I act in class, I am not so sure”*. Furthermore, Lecturer 7 confirmed this view: *“I think it is the model, we are IC’s (independent contractors) and we see it as your time is your money ... pay me for it and then don’t worry about the feedback ... or you going to give me constructive, valuable feedback and I am going to grow and better myself.”* However, Lecturer 5 considered it a punitive and not a developmental task, which s/he did in order to get a contract: *“It didn’t feel that it was natural reflection but more artificially forced reflection... ticking a box, because someone expects ... And I think that kinda removed the reflective space.”* Lecturer 4 believed it was just another administrative task. By making the teaching portfolio obligatory, it affected the lecturers’ motivation and reasons for doing a teaching portfolio. This is akin to the analysis in Theme 3 (section 4.6.3.6), where a common thread emerged as to the value of a portfolio.
- Return for effort:** A big issue that influenced the lecturers’ perception about the value of completing a teaching portfolio was that there was no feedback from the institution about it, nor were any growth areas identified or recognised. This is the minimum return that the lecturers expected from the institution for the substantial effort required to do a teaching portfolio. The lack of a response by the institution caused disappointment, even anger, among some of the lecturers: *“I have done two teaching portfolios and I have spent hours and hours doing this ... I put a lot of effort into it” (Lecturer 2)*. Lecturer 7 had a similar response: *“What is the point? ... naturally people don’t want to invest time...[if there is no return] ... I don’t see the feedback ... it’s more like, you are naughty we are not going to give you your increase ... I am seeing it as punitive, so I am going to rebel against it.”* It is clear that these lecturers experienced a lack of return for their efforts.

- **Dynamic process:** Growth and development should be viewed as dynamic, which made the doing of a teaching portfolio twice a year unhelpful, because you did not know your groups. If “*you set out goals in January ... it may not be realistic ... [because] every group is different*” (Lecturer 3). Portfolios should be done on an ongoing basis in order to be effective and realistic. Lecturer 5 believed that lecturers ought to reflect as part of everyday teaching anyway: “One reflects on the task at hand, at the time, especially if they want to stay on top for their game.”
- **Independent contractors’ motivation to do a teaching portfolio:** Lecturer 6’s view was that the context of growth was immaterial to an IC, as they do not get or need a promotion. This meant that the only growth of any value was personal growth. Lecturer 6 also requested that the institution should “*take it [a teaching portfolio] out, because the growth is irrelevant ... because there is no incentive to grow in our environment ... where does it take us, what am I going to get out of it? And whose job are we going to get? The Principals’ job?*” In the context of maximising potential, Lecturer 6 raised the following questions: “*[Do] I want to maximise my potential in this organisation? How the hell am I ever going to maximise it. What is the measure? So, I would have to say absolutely zero [value]*”.

This left financial gain as the only motivation for doing a teaching portfolio. Practically, there was only one reason for being there and that was to get the job done and get paid for it (Lecturers 1 & 6). Lecturer 6 suggested “*If I look at it purely in rands and cents, it’s going to give me a 7% increase at the beginning of the year. Is that it? Is that what I am negotiating for, is that what my self-growth is doing?*”

- **Demotivating:** Lecturer 7 reported that there were some situations related to the doing of a teaching portfolio and a peer review process that were so bad that the result was that many of the lecturers wanted to resign immediately. “*I have also had other discussions where I have wanted to say ... here’s my notice ... because that’s how badly they have gone ... it wasn’t a growth process at all ... more a disciplinary process ... an abuse of power ... going forward the following year you don’t want to invest the time because I am just going to be criticised. ... it’s how it’s structured [that is the problem]*.” (Lecturer 7). The implementation of the process for lecturers to do a teaching portfolio needed careful consideration and planning by the institution. Management needed to ensure that the task of doing a teaching portfolio added and did not detract value according to the lecturers’ perceptions.

#### 4.6.5 **THEME 5: Impact / evidence of the benefits on learner’s learning / results**

Dajani (2014:64) believes that the portfolio is a means to an end of improved student achievement,

as it is seen as an ongoing process of development. Half of the lecturers reported that they too had evidence of the impact on their students' learning, and provided evidence which showed a developmental process in the students. A lecturer's growth results in and directly impacts on students' growth. The evidence available was in the form of assessments and pass rates, which are quantitative measures. But there were also reports which showed qualitative measures such as improved student motivation, behaviour and emotional growth. Four of the eight lecturers (Lecturers 1, 3, 7 & 8) noted and even recorded the evidence of successes that they had observed, which could be linked clearly to their own growth as a result of doing a teaching portfolio.

#### 4.6.5.1 Evidence of student learning and results

Regarding students' results, Lecturer 1 stated that: *"Academic results you certainly can (consider) because you have a quantitative measure and you can see how they have done. I think it is very difficult to tap into the emotional side or the development side, especially in higher education institution, where you are teaching large classes"*. Lecturer 3 found that using the pass rate *"makes me focus on what I would need to do. And that then filters down to the students ... I personally do feel that it does assist or impact the learners and the way that they think, when I do a teaching portfolio"*. Good planning and strategies are used by Lecturer 7 to suit a specific group: *"Doing the portfolio forced me to link the results with the action or the strategy and that then definitely showed an impact on the learners ... that forced you to find the value"*. Lecturer 8 felt that changing her strategy after doing a teaching portfolio impacted on the students, because *"my growth caused their growth ... that's quite a rich growth, it's cognitive, it's emotional, it's motivational, it's in their behaviour as well as it's in their marks, so yes it's quite worthwhile?"*

- **New areas of growth:** Lecturer 5 reported that a teaching portfolio challenged and instigated new areas of growth, *"the first developmental portfolio had a section on technology in the classroom ... I had to grow that, so... every year I would say how can I keep on ... so PowerPoint, ... Slide Share ... Edmodo classroom ... everything's got a video ... a Facebook page running ... following me on Twitter, ... moving on to the MOOC (massive-on-line-course). But I think that for the students it impacted on them ... it made my lectures more relevant .... I think ... that [using technology] was the biggest change that I was mapping."*
- **No effect on students:** There were reports of no effects on students by Lecturer 2 who stated: *"[N]o, doing a teaching portfolio has not caused any growth. Maybe from my daily reflections, yes, but not from doing a teaching portfolio."* Lecturer 4 observed: *"[I]n terms of its impact on the learners thinking, behaviour and attitude, No I don't think so, not much."*
- **Development plan:** Lecturer 6 suggested that a development plan might have an impact on students' learning, but not a teaching portfolio: *"There may be [evidence], not because of the reflection or all that other gobbledygook stuff, but because I did look and analyse"*

*the way that I was teaching ... my methodologies ... I am constantly looking for new ways ... it could be the task, it could be the portfolio.*" Most of the lecturers stated that there was a lack of clarity about what the distinction was between the effects of everyday lecturing and the doing of a teaching portfolio.

#### **4.6.6 THEME 6: Lecturers' important points concerning a teaching portfolio**

The collected data provided insights into other important aspects, which need to be mentioned in this section. These added to the positive results of completing a teaching portfolio. Teaching portfolios were useful to showcase a lecturer's knowledge and skills at the time of a promotion, and it helped to inform employees as to the quality of the service they offered. The first time of doing a teaching portfolio was overwhelming and good training was needed. However, these initial portfolios were the most valuable, as they bolstered self-confidence, motivation and ensured a rich outcome to this learning process. It was essential that a teaching portfolio should be linked to a face-to-face discussion with a mentor who had superior knowledge and skills. The mentor could offer valuable guidance and support to the mentee, which would lead to both of their growth.

##### *4.6.6.1 Employment opportunities*

A teaching portfolio was an important way to sell your knowledge and skills at the time of a job application or promotion, because it showed employers the quality of services you could offer them. Lecturer 1 believed that *"if you are really passionate about it and especially if you are going for a promotion, it is something that counts ... if you want good employers... think about the service it (the portfolio) is delivering, it is quite an important aspect."*

##### *4.6.6.2 Training*

When you are introduced to a teaching portfolio for the first time, the lecturers argued that it was an overwhelming experience, which required assistance. Lecturer 2 explained: *"At the beginning ... when we were introduced to a teaching portfolio, I think it is was like a shock ... the people taking these courses need to be knowledgeable about a teaching portfolio."* The training needed to be efficient and to include reasons why a teaching portfolio was expected by that institution, because this affected motivation and value.

#### **4.6.7 THEME 7: Recommendations for improved value of completing a teaching portfolio**

The real value of doing a teaching portfolio was projected into the future by the years of experience that lay ahead (Ravitech, 2014:n.p.). It was essential that the lecturer doing the portfolio needed to

perceive it as a valuable process, which meant that the teaching portfolio needed to consist of tasks that caused growth and development. The motivation for doing a portfolio impacted on its value. Grift and Major (2013:18) emphasise that in teacher education, metacognition needs to be introduced and developed. This means that growth must be initiated and facilitated by a mindful teacher for him/herself and this is best started as part of teaching practice from the beginning of the student teachers' tertiary education. Lecturers reported on various issues that they believed could change the process and the motivation to do a teaching portfolio. If these suggestions are implemented, then this might increase the value of doing a portfolio in the future.

- **Implementation style:** This is important because a teaching portfolio must be perceived as valuable the first time you do it. It records and sums-up what you have done throughout the year, but it must be done as a two-way developmental process, where the emphasis should be on feedback for growth. It must be a continuous assessment that measures performance. However, it should not be linked to an increase in rate of payment or be obligatory. Lecturer 3 believed that the institution should not *"force you into doing it because it was linked to your rate adjustment ... or pay cheque or even ... to be contracted for the next academic year."* In the lecturers' view that will impact on whether the process is genuine or done to impress.

Some of the lecturers suggested that the implementation of the teaching portfolio be at different times of the year. Lecturer 2 considered it to be a very valuable tool to end the year as *"it's a nice sum up of the year. [it] can bring pride in what you do"*. Lecturer 3 believed that *"it should be a continuous development assessment, as opposed to a once-off event."*

- **Feedback:** Lecturer 7 focused on the importance of feedback, as a conversation with some kind of value for effort: *"For me if I can see the value, I get constructive feedback then I am happy to do it, ...if it's treated as this tick-in-the-box, then I am going to treat it the same. Someone needs to acknowledge receipt ... read the document ... chat to you about it ... let's have a discussion. I am more than happy to do that. But you know when it just gets filed and okay you will be contracted, then it loses its value. And you have used my time for no value! Time is precious."* The most important message from the lecturers to the institution was that the use of teaching portfolios should not be a waste of time.
- **Key performance areas:** Lecturer 6 was of the view that a teaching portfolio was a good tool to measure key performance areas: *"If we stick with understanding it is a key performance area as in any job that we perform, ... the skills that I am using in the classroom are they working,"* then it is valuable.

#### 4.6.7.1 Alternatives to doing a teaching portfolio

Lecturer 6 suggested that there were *"ways to attempt to maximise your potential, what you (the*



researcher) is doing now is ten times more beneficial than doing a teaching portfolio". Other suggestions from lecturers for alternatives to a teaching portfolio were: discussion groups, and workshops which challenged the lecturers' skills. These were seen to help a lecturers grow and were perceived to be of greater value. Lecturer 7 reported *"that MOOC have been found to be very helpful as they challenge a person's thinking"*. It was obvious that the lecturers' opinions as to what was valuable varied according to individuals, which necessitated a personal development plan which might or might not include a teaching portfolio.

#### **4.7 RESEARCH FINDINGS: VALUE OF A TEACHING PORTFOLIO**

The teaching portfolio was seen as a tool which a lecturer could use to structure and plan a strategy for individual growth and development. In this process, both findings in the literature as well as the lecturers' views have shown that reflection was a prerequisite skill for the doing of a teaching portfolio. There were variations among the lecturers regarding the depth of thinking required in the reflection as well as the skills that resulted from the reflection process, and these influenced the differences in perception as to the value of reflection in a teaching portfolio.

##### **4.7.1 Synopsis: research findings from the literature on the value of a teaching portfolio**

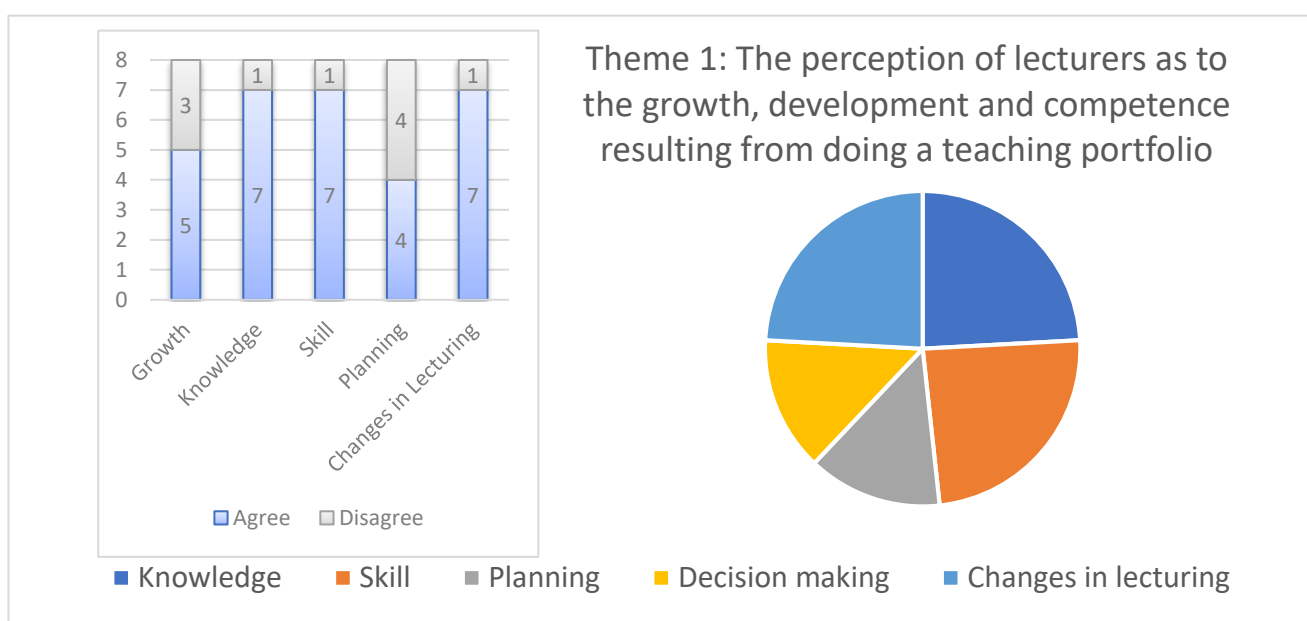
According to findings in the literature, a teaching portfolio is a thoughtfully selected and unabridged version of documents that portray "individuality, autonomy, professional growth and competence" within one's teaching (Campbell et al. 2014:3). Furthermore, this provides a growing professional with tangible and documented evidence of a range of knowledge, skills and teaching experience that he/she possesses. The teaching portfolio is in essence, a portrait demonstrating a lecturer's or a teacher's professional competence. It is also seen as a strategy that documents, records and presents the evidence of successful teaching by "maximising the benefits for self-improvement and learning" (Frunzeanu, 2014:117). Dajani (2014:62) mentions that it is used to "structure thinking ... and it causes teachers to think deeply about their teaching practices." It also allows the lecturer to assess their own capacity to execute self-regulated learning, as the teaching portfolio could assist this by "highlighting planning, reflective capacity and teaching strengths and weaknesses" (Meeus et al. 2009: 405-407). There are numerous additional views about portfolios recorded in Chapter 2 of this research study.

##### **4.7.2 Research findings: Lecturers' perceptions on the value of a teaching portfolio**

From the interview process, a great deal of findings were documented (cf. section 4.6), this is summarised here to meet the objectives of this study and it provided insights into the lecturers' perception of the process of doing a teaching portfolio.

#### 4.7.2.1 Growth, development and competence (cf. section 4.6.1)

The representation in Figure 4.1 depicted how the lecturers' perceived the value of a teaching portfolio regarding growth, development and competence. Knowledge (cf. section 4.6.1.1) and skills (cf. section 4.6.1.2) were both developed and recognised by seven of the eight lecturers. These aspects were developed equally, which indicated the importance of the application of new knowledge in a teaching context. Next, the doing of a teaching portfolio assisted in developing planning skills, which positively affected four of the eight lecturers (cf. section 4.6.1.3). This was shown, because by the very nature of a teaching portfolio, it provided this structure. Finally, seven of the eight lecturers reported changes in their lecturing and decision-making skills (cf. section 4.6.1.3). Both aspects were recognised as equally important and impacted on lecturers' growth (cf. section 4.6.1.4).

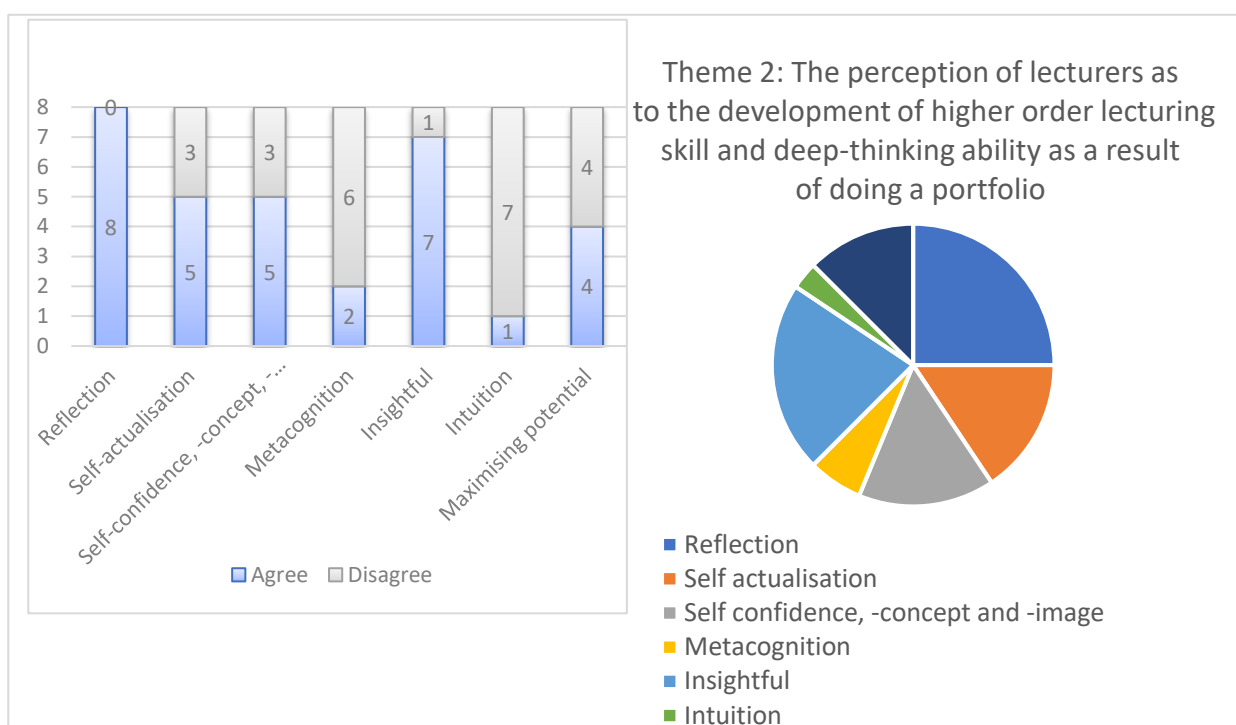


**Figure 4.1: Value - Growth, development and competence as a result of doing a teaching portfolio**

#### 4.7.2.2 Higher-order lecturing skill and deep-thinking ability (cf. section 4.6.2)

Theme 2 indicates the growth of higher-order cognitive processes which lecturers used and developed as a result of doing a teaching portfolio. Figure 4.2 graphically represents the combination of these skills. There is evidence provided by all eight of the lecturers that indicate the rich value of reflection needed and developed while doing a teaching portfolio. All eight of the lecturers agreed that reflection (cf. section 4.6.2.1) was the greatest benefit experienced when doing a teaching portfolio. The next benefit was that seven of the eight lecturers considered that the doing of a teaching portfolio led to valuable insights (cf. section 4.6.2.5). Five of the eight lecturers reported

self-actualisation (cf. section 4.6.2.2) as a benefit, as well as the fact that a teaching portfolio helped to build self-confidence, self-concept and self-image (cf. section 4.6.2.3). Half of the lecturers believed that doing a teaching portfolio could help a person maximise their potential as a lecturer (cf. section 4.6.2.7). However, two of the eight lecturers experienced the process as metacognitive (cf. section 4.6.2.4). Lastly, only one of the lecturers developed the ability to be intuitive (cf. section 4.6.2.6). Intuition represented a complex skill, as it required deep metacognitive and well developed, deep thinking skills. It is unclear whether less lecturers experienced this benefit due to lack of commitment towards the doing of a teaching portfolio or whether this pointed to a lack of motivation. Another possibility is that given the complexity of this skill, which required complex, higher-order thinking processes, fewer people attained it.

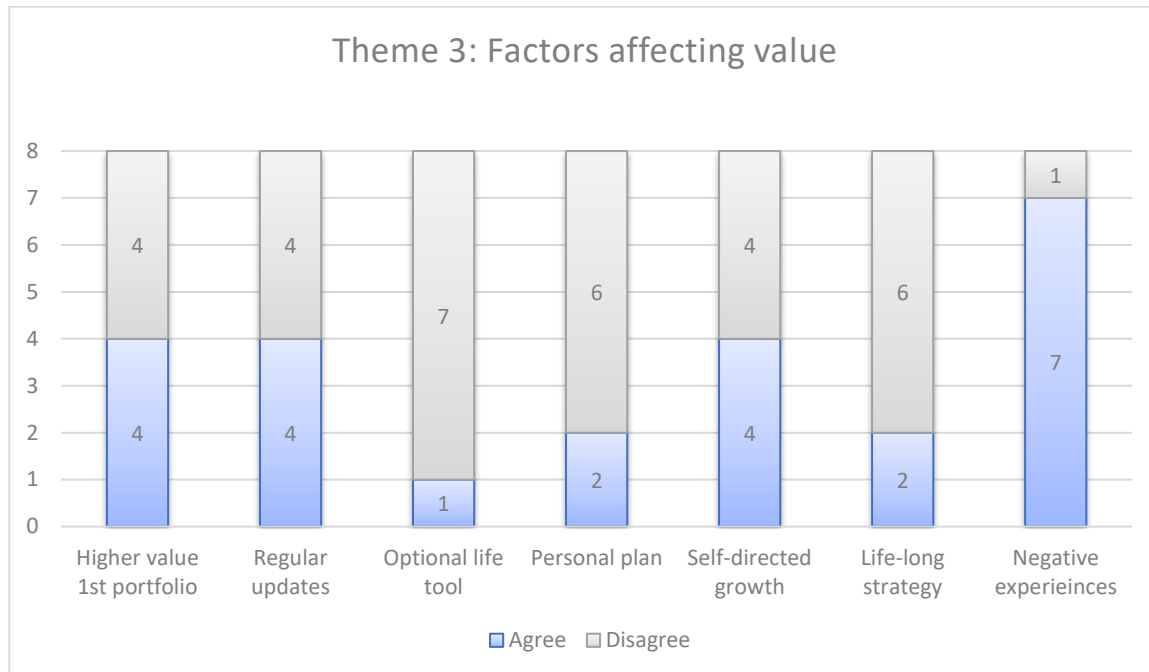


**Figure 4.2: Theme 2: Higher-order lecturing skill and deep-thinking ability**

#### 4.7.2.3 Factors affecting the value of a teaching portfolio

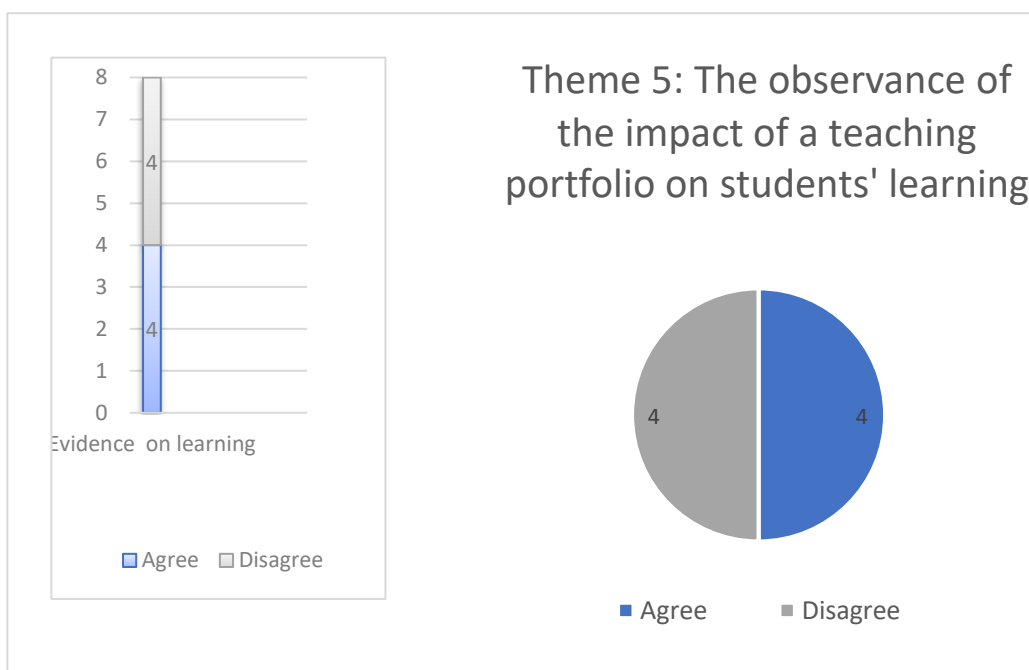
Theme 3 recorded the factors that affected the value of a teaching portfolio. Figure 4.3 depicts a representation indicating the factors that affected the value of a teaching portfolio. Positive values were that a teaching portfolio must become a self-directed growth strategy (4 of the 8). Two of the lecturers experienced the doing of a teaching portfolio as developing a personal and a lifelong strategy. Four of the lecturers stated that the first experience of doing a portfolio had a higher value than subsequent ones. One of the lecturers considered a portfolio to be an optional, lifelong tool, which was of value for the rest of her career. However, seven of the eight lecturers had had negative

experiences during the process of doing a teaching portfolio at this particular institution, which created a negative view towards a teaching portfolio. The result was that these experiences reduced the lecturers' motivation and also created a dislike of the process, as was shown in detail during Theme 4.



**Figure 4.3: Factors affecting value of a teaching portfolio**

#### 4.7.2.4 Evidence of impact of a teaching portfolio on the students



**Figure 4.4: Evidence of impact of a teaching portfolio on the students' learning**

The representation in Figure 4.4 depicted that half of the lecturers that used a teaching portfolio found that their personal development in knowledge and skills had a positive impact on their students in a noticeable way, as measured by successes achieved in their learning and in their results.

#### **4.7.3 Comparison: literature findings and lecturers' perception on the skillset developed by doing a teaching portfolio**

In the combined skillset, which resulted from doing a teaching portfolio found in Chapter 2, Table 2.1, it showed that the literature revealed how doing a teaching portfolio was a valuable experience. When combining the lecturers' perspectives, as reported during the personal interviews, and tabulating them (Addendum K), it showed a valuable comparison between the findings in the literature and the results of the interviews. There was a good match, because most of the skills were the same, except that the lecturers did not identify critical review, values and attitudes and creativity as affordances of doing a teaching portfolio, which was in contrast to the findings in the literature and (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.6.1).

The comparison between the literature findings and the lecturers' personal/professional development of skills and (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.6.1) appeared to identify similar affordances. A detailed and cross-referenced version is in Addendum L.

The comparison between the literature's findings and the lecturers' perceptions of metacognitive/higher-order lecturing skills and deep-thinking (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.6.2) showed a great similarity. The only exception was that the lecturers did not report on values, beliefs and assumptions as benefits, neither did they refer to an architectural role in thinking. The detailed and cross-referenced version of the comparison is in Addendum M (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.6.2).

The comparison between the literature's findings and the lecturers' perception of emotional development (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.6.2.3) is shown in Table N (Addendum N). There was a good match between the literature's findings and the lecturers' perception of an emotional development as a result of doing a teaching portfolio. Most of the lecturers reported that the completing of a teaching portfolio was a valuable exercise, although each experience was unique for an individual. The comprehensive, detailed tabulated version is in Addendum N (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.6), which showed the similarities between the literature's perspective and that of the lecturers concerning the skillset that a teaching portfolio developed.

## 4.8 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

The National Teaching and Learning Manager for the institution where the research took place consented to provide the guidelines for the teaching portfolio. These guidelines were referred to by the selected institution as the “Contents of a Teaching Portfolio” (Criteria-referenced assessment of quality of teaching service delivery, version 8, 2015), and a copy is found in Addendum I. The document provided insights into the suggested content of a typical teaching portfolio, which the institution expected the lecturers who were interviewed for this research to complete. This document is part of a larger document that was a development plan for lecturing staff at the institution. The section of this document is copied with verbal permission of the Teaching and Learning Manager of the institution concerned, however, all identification has been removed from the document.

### 4.8.1 Reflection and analysis

The researcher reflected on the guidelines received from the institution’s Teaching and Learning Manager, and analysed it to allow for a comparison to the literature findings on the content of a teaching portfolio (section 2.2.4). In addition, the researcher searched for any references to content reported on by the lecturers in the personal interviews. The basic principles of all portfolios concerned was that of a typical teaching portfolio, namely, to “collect, select and reflect” Dajani (2014:62).

**Table 4.3: Document analysis: content of a teaching portfolio**

Literature findings on content of teaching portfolios	Guidelines from institution	Lecturer’s perception on teaching portfolios
Demographics (Section 2.2.4 in Chapter 2)	Demographics (Addendum I - Criteria-referenced assessment of quality of teaching service delivery, version 8, 2015)	Not reported by lecturers
Teaching philosophy (Section 2.2.4 in Chapter 2)	Teaching Philosophy (Addendum I)	Teaching Philosophy (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.1.1 Knowledge, 4.6.1.2 Skill, 4.6.1.3 Planning) (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.4 Metacognition)
Teaching responsibility (Section 2.2.4 in Chapter 2)	Teaching responsibility (Addendum I)	Teaching responsibility (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.1.2 Skill, 4.6.1.3 Planning)
Innovative teaching strategy (Section 2.2.4 in Chapter 2)	Innovative and effective teaching strategy and projects (including technology) (Addendum I)	Innovative use of technology Teaching responsibility (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.1.2 Skill, 4.6.1.3 Planning)
Value added for teaching and learning (Section 2.2.4 in Chapter 2)	Value added for teaching and learning (Addendum I)	Value added for teaching and learning (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme : 4.6.1.2 Skill, 4.6.1.4 Changes in lecturing, 4.6.2.5 Insight) (Theme 5 Benefits to the learner)

Industry achievement (Section 2.2.4 in Chapter 2)	Industry achievement (Addendum I)	Industry achievement & awards (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.1.2 Skill, 4.6.1.5 Changes in lecturing) (4.6.1 Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.2 Self-actualisation, 4.6.2.7 Maximising potential)
Reflective teaching practice (Section 2.2.4 in Chapter 2)	Reflective teaching practice (Addendum I)	Reflective teaching practice (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2. Reflection)
(Literature did not link pass rate to a teaching portfolio)	Reflection on increasing pass rate (Addendum I)	Reflection on pass rate (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.1 Reflection, 4.6.2.5 Insight) (Theme 5 - Benefits to the learner)
Teaching material development (Section 2.2.4 in Chapter 2)	Teaching material development and activities (Addendum I)	Teaching material development (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.1.1 Knowledge, 4.6.1.2 Skill, 4.6.1.3 Planning, 4.6.2.7 Maximising potential) (Theme 5 - Benefits to the learner)
Teaching effectiveness/ self-evaluation (Section 2.2.4 in Chapter 2)	Teaching effectiveness (Addendum I)	Teaching effectiveness (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.1.1 Knowledge, 4.6.1.2 Skill, 4.6.1.3 Planning, 4.6.2.7 Maximising potential) (Theme 5 - Benefits to the learner)
	Integrated student support, for example, language etc. (Addendum I)	Language support (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme 4.6.1.2 Skill, 4.6.1.4 Changes in lecturing) (4.6.2 Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.5 Insight) (Theme 5 - Benefits to the learner)
	Marking as teaching (Addendum I)	
Artefacts of evidence (Section 2.2.4 in Chapter 2)	Artefacts of evidence and professional development (Addendum I)	Artefacts of evidence (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.1.3 Planning) (4.6.2 Theme 2 – subtheme: 4.6.2.1 Reflection)
Evidence and certificates (Section 2.2.4 in Chapter 2)	Not recorded by lecturers	Not reported by lecturers
Lesson examples (Section 2.2.4 in Chapter 2)	Not recorded by lecturers	Not reported by lecturers
CV (Added attachment for a quick reference to a lecturer's career) (Section 2.2.4 in Chapter 2)	Not required by lecturers	Not reported by lecturers

*Key for themes: Theme 1: Value related to growth, development and competence*

*Theme 2: Value related to higher-order lecturing skills and deep-thinking ability*

*Theme 5: Impact/evidence of the benefits on the learners' learning results*

The comparison of the content indicated in Table 4.3 showed a huge similarity to what was required in a typical teaching portfolio. These findings reflected the content of the teaching portfolio as mentioned in the literature (Dajani, 2014:62; Talburt, n.d: 20; GroiBbock, 2012:42) and, the content required by the tertiary institution (Addendum I), as well as the details mentioned by the lecturers in the interviews. It showed that the content was mostly the same.

However, there were differences: the literature suggested that more content was required in a teaching portfolio such as artefacts. Examples of artefacts were lessons and activities as well as evidence of planning and teaching found in lesson plans. These examples probably made a teaching portfolio more relevant to primary and secondary teaching, as opposed to tertiary teaching. The tertiary institution required extra details about pass rates, and specific use of technology, thus its requirements were more site and industry specific. This showed the relevance of a teaching portfolio to a specific setting. The lecturers referred to most of the content as specified by both the literature and the institution. However, during the interviews, the lecturers did not focus on the content of the document concerned but rather on the portfolio's value.

#### **4.8.2 Salient points about teaching portfolios mentioned by the Teaching and Learning Manager of the tertiary institution**

The Teaching and Learning Manager reported the following ideas, which are summarised here. A teaching portfolio started as a self-help plan, but with commitment and reflection it became a way to ensure growth, because it required the lecturers to get involved in the process and to invest their time. Doing a teaching portfolio required an individual to use the flexibility that accompanied the process and to customise their own personal teaching portfolio.

The preferred outcome was that it would result in best practice and contributed to the development and growth of each lecturer at a personal level. The process of doing a teaching portfolio should involve feedback as well as mediation. This mediation was supported and implemented at a campus level, so there might be differences in interpretation and the process as a result. This portfolio development formed part of an overall development plan and a peer review process.

An on-line version of the teacher portfolio was introduced by the institution. It was intended as a personalised development plan which included discussion, mediation and a peer review process to develop growth opportunities. The new forum included teaching tools as well as discussion boards.

#### **4.8.3 Important thoughts with regards to the content of a teaching portfolio**

A typical teaching portfolio contained critical information about a lecturer's career. The literature, the institution specifications and the lecturers' perception showed large agreement as to what a typical teaching portfolio should include. The intention of the portfolio was to create a self-initiated, planned



and structured opportunity to instigate growth and development as a lecturer. However, each teaching portfolio must be tailor made for the lecturer as well as to specify their growth.

Perceptions varied as well as provided different meanings regarding the value of a teaching portfolio. This helped to account for the variations between the lecturers' perceptions and the institution's requirements as to how a teaching portfolio was implemented.

#### **4.9 CONCLUSION**

When considering the data collected, the researcher found that much data were generated from the lecturers' opinions, and this data did prove to be rich. Each lecturer perceived the experience of doing a teaching portfolio in a personal way, which reflected their personal values. The opinions were varied and both positive and negative regarding the value doing a teaching portfolio. From the lengthy conversations, seven themes were generated, and in turn were interlinked with the subthemes.

Themes 1 and 2 related to the value of doing a teaching portfolio. Theme 1 concerned the lecturers' growth, development and competence as a result of doing a teaching portfolio, whereas Theme 2 showed the value of a teaching portfolio to higher-order lecturing skills and deep-thinking abilities. In Theme 3, factors were identified that affected the value of doing a teaching portfolio, while Theme 4 showed factors that caused a reduced value while doing a teaching portfolio. Theme 5 concerned the evidence presented by the lecturers regarding the students' learning or results in a teaching portfolio, and Theme 6 presented the lecturers' reflections concerning a teaching portfolio. Finally, Theme 7 made some recommendations by the lecturers as a result of their experiences of doing a teaching portfolio with the intention of improving its value. The themes were found to be very similar to the findings in the literature and these were linked to emphasise their relevance to the process and value of doing a teaching portfolio.

Themes 1, 2 and 5 were the most important, as they allowed the researcher to find answers to the research questions of this study. Themes 3, 4 and 6 provided added value regarding an understanding and recommendations based on lecturers' perceptions of a teaching portfolio. Chapter 5 contains the summary, the answers to the research questions, recommendations and this chapter concludes this research study.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter will provide a discussion of the research findings in relation to the main research question: What are the lecturers' perceptions of the value of completing a teaching portfolio? A qualitative research methodology was used to understand and interpret the lecturers' perceptions of a teaching portfolio. A hermeneutic approach allowed for greater insight and depth into the lecturers' perceptions. The researcher clustered the data into themes to attain deeper meaning, and these themes were used to answer the research question. This process led to recommendations being made as a result of this research, followed by the conclusion.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The findings from the literature, the research findings, the analysis of the institution's document as well as the personal interview with the Teaching and Learning Manager provided the following credible, valuable and mutually supportive findings on the value of a teaching portfolio.

##### **5.2.1 In what way does the experience of completing a teaching portfolio influence the lecturers' thinking and behaviour in the classroom?**

Themes 1 and 2 drew on the lecturers' perceptions about the doing of a teaching portfolio, and they answered the main research question. The data was extremely rich and detailed and confirmed that the experience of completing a teaching portfolio impacted on the lecturers' thinking and behaviour in the following ways:

Theme 1 included evidence of growth and development in the areas of knowledge and skills as well as lecturing competence. The knowledge gained converted into skills, which were practiced in the classroom. By doing this practice continuously, it prevented the lecturers from 'getting stuck in a rut', as they added new aspects, problem solved and used new strategies for teaching. The lecturers discussed planning as a crucial aspect. They stated that a portfolio assisted in structuring their thoughts, helped to take stock of knowledge and incorporated the required skills.

Theme 2 drew on the rich development of higher-order skills and ability. All the lecturers identified that the portfolio provided opportunities for reflection and the development of insight, which enhanced their lecturing. Akin to this was self-actualisation, which built self-confidence, self-concept and self-

image. An important finding in this theme was that a teaching portfolio assisted the lecturers in strategising and maximising their potential. Within this theme, the concept of metacognition was recognised by a few of the lecturers. Thus a teaching portfolio was reported to affect knowledge, skills, as well as behaviour while lecturing. The lecturers overwhelmingly reported that a portfolio deepened their knowledge, provided avenues to hone their skills, which helped to develop quality teaching and learning. Thus practicing metacognition or “thinking about one’s thinking” (Lecturer 1) enriched the delivery of their lectures.

Many factors from the findings drew on the value of the lecturers’ growth and development as a result of doing a portfolio. These changes happened at a personal as well as at an institutional level. The research findings supported these views: Growth was noticed by the increase in knowledge and skills; knowledge was created within an individual and stemmed from an individual’s experiences and beliefs (Toraman & Demir, 2016:13). This personal journey then determined how the individuals’ reality constantly changed; it is seen to be constructed personally and subjectively by each of the lecturers during their active involvement in their personal learning process (de Vos et al. 2014:310).

The completion of a teaching portfolio was a constructive process, because each of the participants’ views influenced the way they grew. A teaching portfolio allowed the lecturers to demonstrate their knowledge and skills (Frunzeanu, 2014:117). This helped to keep their teaching relevant, validated their approach, deepened their understanding and was constructed and reconstructed on a daily basis (Kecik et al. 2012:175). Blumberg (2014:49) suggested that to achieve the goal of teaching that promoted deep and intentional learning, the instructors must reflect continually and critically on each of the essential aspects of teaching. This strategy had three interrelated facets; reflection, critical review, and documentation. The lecturers also found this to be an important part of the process of doing a teaching portfolio. All of the participants supported the notion that the doing of a teaching portfolio caused them to reflect.

### **5.2.2 In what way does the experience of reflection result in self-directed and goal-directed growth?**

Reflection was unanimously reported by the lecturers as providing the prime value and importance of doing a teaching portfolio, although the depth of the reflection varied at a personal level and was different for each lecturer. It was apparent that a teaching portfolio created a space for the lecturers to focus, which resulted in reflection that had an impact on the quality of the teaching and learning. The teaching portfolio also helped with the identification of the lecturers’ strengths and weaknesses, but in a positive, growth-orientated way. In some cases, it created a space for the lecturers to learn how to reflect, although this happened in varying degrees. Reflection led to deeper and more intentional, structured reflection. Weber (2014:83) claimed that reflection was central to learning, and the lecturers engaged with this process, which is a crucial ingredient for learning and change (Weber,

From the findings, a teaching portfolio helped to make the unconscious, conscious. It helped the lecturers to understand what they had achieved, how effective their methods were, and to improve on what did not work well. A teaching portfolio was a barometer, which measured the effectiveness of the lecturers' teaching as well as the achievement of their goals. The findings showed that a teaching portfolio embellished the lecturers' teaching and made them better practitioners. This finding was validated by linking lecturers' performance to their students' results. Reflection happened at different levels: as a metacognitive process; during the process of teaching; and, it helped to develop goal-directed plans for teaching.

Thus it was important to know how reflection was understood by the participants in this study, and how it helped when completing a portfolio. Reflection can happen: as a once-off event; after an actual lecture; after achieving a goal; as part of an ongoing process; or, as an annual event. However, the findings showed that continuous reflection provided the best value.

Participants responded positively and valued the process more when there was a voluntary commitment to doing a teaching portfolio and when it was part of an ongoing process. The higher the value placed on the doing of the portfolio, the more it was reported in a positive light by the lecturers. Results, such as higher-order lecturing skills and deep-thinking ability, encouraged the lecturers' development of skills such as intuitive thinking and self-actualisation. These results led to the lecturers experiencing positive change and growth, which in turn led to a greater willingness to do a teaching portfolio. This growth was experienced systematically, regardless of how long the lecturers had been lecturing. The doing of a teaching portfolio would be experienced and valued more when a lecturer chose to do it voluntarily rather than if they are forced to do one. The reason was that by doing a teaching portfolio voluntarily, then it created ownership of the process by a lecturer, while being forced to do one made it a mandatory task.

Another finding was the notion that a teaching portfolio should be linked to a development plan. By doing so, this was perceived by the lecturers as leading to self-directed growth and reflection through metacognition. In some cases, the "thinking about thinking (lecturer 1)" caused reflection, evaluation, critique, and goal setting, which implied that the lecturers took ownership of the process. When this was combined with a peer review or discussion about practice (with someone who was more knowledgeable and skillful), then the lecturers found the process of doing a teaching portfolio to be the most valuable. GroiBbock (2012:42) saw reflection as happening at a metacognitive and higher-order thinking level. This is where one chose to reflect on one's own cognitive processes, solved problems by viewing them from different angles. This resulted in change and enabled a change of perspective.

### 5.2.3 In what way does this appear to impact or have value on the students' quality of learning?

Some of the lecturers provided evidence that by doing a teaching portfolio, it has had an impact on their students' learning:

**Quantitative measures:** Reflection on evidence, for example, assessment results and pass rates led the lecturers to plan and strategise ways to better their students' success rates. The lecturer's growth resulted in the students' growth, and the portfolio provided evidence of this link. . A teaching portfolio helped the lecturer to set up a personal plan, which was driven by the lecturer. This plan affected both teaching and learning and it altered competence in both the lecturers and the students, because it had an impact on the way the students thought, and it affected their motivation, behaviour and emotional growth. A teaching portfolio served to modernise the lecturers' teaching, for example, the creative use of technology. According to Göbinger (2014:86), the value of reflective practice could affect both practitioners and students in teaching and learning settings.

**Daily task vs portfolio task:** Some of the lecturers believed that they analysed and reflected on their teaching methods as a daily course of action, which helped them to achieve certain outcomes. This is part of the everyday task of lecturing, therefore the portfolio had no impact on this practice.

### 5.2.4 In what way would self-directed growth become a lifelong tool in the experience of a personalised learning environment?

Some of the lecturers perceived the doing of a teaching portfolio to have significant value as a lifelong and personalised tool. They considered the teaching portfolio to be valuable, because it was part of a personalised development plan, which caused the lecturer to reflect, notice and even critique their own lecturing. This meant that they found this experience so rewarding that they were motivated to repeat the process in an ongoing way, which indicated how andragogy and a metacognitive process were applied to their teaching and learning. A development plan in this context was linked to a peer review process, which allowed for mentorship by a peer who had more knowledge and skills. These lecturers considered this mentoring process linked to the teaching portfolio as valuable to their growth and development.

This finding was underpinned by the literature that reported that as a part of lifelong learning (LLL), people should personally plan, manage and direct their own knowledge and growth. By trying new ideas, the lecturers could explore and create their own personal learning experience across the span of their career. It is important, after the lecturers' tertiary education, to sustain this growth and learning throughout their working lives. Learning must therefore be self-driven and individualised, where an individual should be sensitive to the need for further learning and also proactive in planning and

accomplishing it. This learning aimed to improve competency, knowledge and skills in all personal, social and teaching-related matters (Leone, 2013:1).

The more the lecturers valued the doing of a teaching portfolio, the more the likelihood that they would apply themselves to the task. In the case of the lecturer who was committed to doing a teaching portfolio, the process was systematic and it continued throughout the year (Lecturer 3). Another lecturer believed that a portfolio was something that ought to be done throughout their working life (Lecturer 8). The motivation to do a teaching portfolio is higher if the lecturer has the freedom of choice to develop their personalised version of a teaching portfolio, which included an individually identified growth strategy.

However, this study's findings showed that the majority of the lecturers would not use a teaching portfolio as a voluntary, lifelong tool. For these lecturers a teaching portfolio was a record-keeping tool, which they were compelled to use while they worked at this tertiary institution. Even though they identified and recognised the value of a teaching portfolio during the interview, the lecturers reported that they viewed the process of documentation as too time consuming. Nonetheless, the lecturers acknowledged that a teaching portfolio was a convenient way to document what they had done or would like to do. It also helped to present their teaching philosophy professionally in order to obtain a promotion or to apply for a job.

### 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the research findings, which were discussed in Chapter 4. These recommendations aimed to provide guidelines to optimise the use of a teaching portfolio, so that they might improve the experience of the lecturers completing it, as a self-initiated and reflective tool to enhance their teaching competence.

Institutions could use these recommendations in professional workshops and in institutional planning to develop a teaching portfolio that is robust and indicative of lifelong learning.

An emphasis on the following assists this process:

- **Growth in knowledge, skill and competence:** Lecturers need to understand the importance of the construction of knowledge, skills and competence that are a result of doing a teaching portfolio. However, there needs to be individual accountability, and the process must be owned by the lecturer and undertaken voluntarily.
- **Motivation:** Growth, development and competence impacts directly on a lecturer's motivation to do the task. This needs to be an internal motivation, because of its intended personal value from the process. If this relationship is not established, then both the

metacognition and the reflection will not be genuine. Sustained motivation will result in deeper levels of reflection, which will have an impact on knowledge, skills and the development of a lifetime commitment to the task.

- **Implementation:** The institution that decides to implement the requirement for the portfolio ought to negotiate the expected outcomes of the process with the lecturers. Regular workshops need to be held to facilitate communication between the institution and the lecturers. There should be a dedicated support structure that aims to achieve valuable outcomes, which will benefit all stakeholders. Time needs to be set aside by both parties to help the growth process, so that a mutual understanding of the rewards and the value of doing a teaching portfolio develops.
- **Initial Implementation:** The first portfolio delivers the most value, so the concept of a teaching portfolio should be introduced as early as possible in a teaching career. This means it could happen during initial training with student teachers or with new members of staff at a tertiary institution. However, this requires that all stakeholders invest time and effort in the initial phase to realise any long-term benefits.
- **Personalised context:** A “tailor made” and personalised teaching portfolio must be implemented in tandem with a mentorship process. This creates an individualised teaching portfolio to meet all the lecturers’ needs and expectations across experience, qualifications, knowledge, skills and competence. This spectrum forms part of and is evident at any institution. By focusing on a lecturer’s personal growth and development, this could have an impact on a lecturer’s perceived value of doing a portfolio and affect a lecturer’s motivation positively. This process would be beneficial for the institution too.
- **Mentorship and guidance:** Novice lecturers must receive mentorship and guidance from a knowledgeable and respected peer, who will help these lecturers grow and develop to their maximum potential. Ideally, a teaching portfolio should be incorporated into a long-term developmental plan for the lecturers’ entire career.
- **Training:** The training of lecturers should be structured and must have a positive impact on their motivation to use a teaching portfolio, which emphasises the potential value of a self-directed learning process. This in turn will promote the long-term use of a teaching portfolio throughout a teaching career.
- **Further research:** A final recommendation is that a similar study needs to be done at other tertiary institutions as well as at primary and secondary levels of education to establish whether this study’s findings are relevant to teachers and lecturers in a broader context.

## **5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH**

The main limitation of this study was the small sample used, because there were only eight participants who reflected on the advantages and disadvantages of doing a teaching portfolio. The sample was made up of lecturers who were qualified at a post-graduate level and had lecturing experience. This meant that no implications could be drawn for student teachers/ new in-service teachers/ new lecturers as to the value they might assign to doing a teaching portfolio.

Furthermore, lecturers from only one tertiary institution were included in the sample, so no comparative data was available, which made it impossible to compare both positive and negative views about teaching portfolios against other sites or at other institutions.

The lecturers in the sample were ICs at the institution, so no data was available to show how full-time lecturers might perceive the value of doing a teaching portfolio. Instead, a teaching portfolio was used by the institution as a tool to assess an hourly rate increase and also as a way to determine whether or not an independent contractor should have his/her contract renewed. Despite these limitations, this study produced rich data based on the interview process.

## **5.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

This chapter reported on the findings of doing a teaching portfolio, which both the literature and the lecturers perceived to have significant value. However, these perceptions varied for each lecturer and it depended on their reasons for doing a teaching portfolio.

The data provided seven themes, three of which helped to answer the research questions, while the balance of the themes provided additional understanding, guidelines and suggestions regarding the process of doing a teaching portfolio. The most significant findings of this study were how a teaching portfolio develops reflection and affects lecturers' motivation.

This research showed that the process of doing a teaching portfolio had valuable benefits, such as the growth and development of knowledge and skills as well as a higher level of lecturing skills, and there was also evidence that these benefits had an impact on the students' learning. In Chapter 4 each of these benefits were discussed in detail and they demonstrated the value of doing a teaching portfolio. However, any combination of these benefits, or even the development of one of them, would add value to a lecturer's growth, development and competence. Some of the lecturers used a portfolio so that they experienced the benefits to both their teaching and learning. For the majority of the lecturers, the doing of a portfolio was informative as well as inspirational. It developed their insights, led to self-actualisation, developed their intuition and helped them to reach their best potential. To enhance the doing of a teaching portfolio, it should be promoted as a vehicle of self-



growth and a lifelong tool. However, the doing of a portfolio should be a choice made by the lecturers based on their personal values.

There is scope for further study concerning the value of doing a teaching portfolio for preservice teachers and in-service teachers at primary and secondary phases of schooling, as well as for the wider, teaching community at a tertiary level. The Departments of Basic and Higher Education and SACE would do well to investigate and recognise the benefits of doing a teaching portfolio for their members.

There is also much to be discovered in how the motivation to do a teaching portfolio could have an impact on an institution. The key is to strategise how to implement the doing of a teaching portfolio so as to maximise the lecturers/ teachers' motivation as part of a personalised development plan. This would demonstrate andragogy, constructivism and a metacognitive process as valuable learning in action.

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## ADDENDUM A: LETTER OF REQUEST TO PRINCIPAL OF COLLEGE



The Principal: XXXXX

Sandton

Dear XXXXXX

### **RE: Request to conduct research**

My name is Elaine Grace and I am doing research under the supervision of Professor Krog, of the College of Education, at UNISA. The title of my research is: "Lecturers' perceptions on the value of the experience of completing a teaching portfolio". The aim of this study is to determine what the perceived value is of the experience of completing a teaching portfolio. This study forms part of the completion of a Master's degree in Psychology of Education. In my research study my objectives are to:

- Explore some lecturers' perceptions as to the perceived value of doing a teaching portfolio by investigating the impact on their professional growth.
- Explore some lecturers' perceptions as to the perceived value of doing a teaching portfolio by investigating the impact on their performance.
- Explore some lecturers' perceptions as to whether the experience of doing a teaching portfolio increased their knowledge and skills.
- Determine whether the strategies implemented to gain knowledge and skills are effective in some lecturers' experience.
- Investigate some lecturers' perceived value of reflection as part of the process of completing a teaching portfolio.
- Determine whether some lecturers perceive reflection to be a valuable self-directed and goal-directed strategy.
- Determine whether some lecturers have evidence that completing a teaching portfolio has a positive result on students' achievement.
- Determine whether some lecturers perceive there to be sufficient value in doing a teaching portfolio for them to use it as a lifelong strategy for their growth and development.

I hereby request permission to approach 8 lecturers to participate individually in a face-to-face interview regarding their views about their experience of completing a teaching portfolio. The lecturers required for this study must be qualified professionals, who have already completed a teaching portfolio as part of their personal development. I have already obtained ethical clearance from the Ethical Committee of the College of Education at UNISA in order to conduct this study.

The lecturers will be approached personally and invited to participate in this study. Participants will only agree to be part of this study on a voluntary basis, and information will be collected anonymously and remain confidential. At no time will these opinions reflect or be purported to be those of your College. In addition, the interviews will take place outside of the times when the participant is contracted by your college for work purposes. A mutually convenient location and time will be established between the researcher and participant lecturer for an interview to be conducted, and it will last approximately 40 minutes. The interview will be recorded digitally to facilitate the collection of accurate information, which will later be transcribed for analysis. However, with the lecturers' permission, anonymous verbatim quotations may be used in the study's report.

I will follow the UNISA's research ethics regulations and use the information for this study only. All participants will be informed as part of the initial contact that they may decide to withdraw their participation from this study at any stage during the research process without any negative consequences. There are minimal risks to any of the voluntary participants in this study, as all questions are recorded as anonymous and will be treated confidentially. There is no payment or reward offered, financial or otherwise, for participating in this study.

If you have any questions regarding this study or would like additional information, then please contact me on cell 082 258 1598 or by email at [elainelydia@gmail.com](mailto:elainelydia@gmail.com). Alternatively, please contact Professor Krog, my supervisor, if you have concerns about the research: email at [krogs@unisa.ac.za](mailto:krogs@unisa.ac.za) and her office telephone number is 012 429 4461.

I look forward to hearing from you, and thank you in advance for your assistance with this project.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elaine Grace". The signature is written in dark ink on a light background.

Elaine Grace  
UNISA Student No: 4623010

## ADDENDUM B: LETTER OF REQUEST – SENIOR DEPUTY PRINCIPAL ACADEMICS, TERTIARY INSTITUTION SANDTON



The Senior Deputy Principal Academics : XXXXXXXX  
Sandton

Dear XXXXXXXX

### **RE: Request to conduct research**

My name is Elaine Grace and I am doing research under the supervision of Professor Krog, of the College of Education, at UNISA. The title of my research is: "Lecturers' perceptions on the value of the experience of completing a teaching portfolio". The aim of this study is to determine what the perceived value is of the experience of completing a teaching portfolio. This study forms part of the completion of a Master's degree in Psychology of Education. In my research study my objectives are to:

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If you have any questions regarding this study or would like additional information, then please contact me on cell 082 258 1598 or by email at [elainelydia@gmail.com](mailto:elainelydia@gmail.com). Alternatively, please contact Professor Krog, my supervisor, if you have concerns about the research: email at [krogs@unisa.ac.za](mailto:krogs@unisa.ac.za) and her office telephone number is 012 429 4461.

I look forward to hearing from you, and thank you in advance for your assistance with this project.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elaine Grace". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Elaine Grace

UNISA Student No: 4623010

## ADDENDUM C: LETTER OF REQUEST TO HEAD OF DEPARTMENT OF COLLEGE OF EDUCATION



The ACADEMIC OPERATIONS CO-ORDINATOR: XXXXXXXXXX

Sandton

Dear XXXXXXXX

### **RE: Request to conduct research**

My name is Elaine Grace and I am doing research under the supervision of Professor Krog, of the College of Education, at UNISA. The title of my research is: "Lecturers' perceptions on the value of the experience of completing a teaching portfolio". The aim of this study is to determine what the perceived value is of the experience of completing a teaching portfolio. This study forms part of the completion of a Master's degree in Psychology of Education. In my research study, my objectives are to:

- Explore some lecturers' perceptions as to the perceived value of doing a teaching portfolio by investigating the impact on their professional growth.
- Explore some lecturers' perceptions as to the perceived value of doing a teaching portfolio by investigating the impact on their performance.
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I will follow the UNISA's research ethics regulations and use the information for this study only. All participants will be informed as part of the initial contact that they may decide to withdraw their participation from this study at any stage during the research process without any negative consequences. There are minimal risks to any of the voluntary participants in this study, as all questions are recorded as anonymous and will be treated confidentially. There is no payment or reward offered, financial or otherwise, for participating in this study.

If you have any questions regarding this study or would like additional information, then please contact me on cell 082 258 1598 or by email at [elainelydia@gmail.com](mailto:elainelydia@gmail.com). Alternatively, please contact Professor Krog, my supervisor, if you have concerns about the research: email at [krogs@unisa.ac.za](mailto:krogs@unisa.ac.za) and her office telephone number is 012 429 4461.

I look forward to hearing from you, and thank you in advance for your assistance with this project.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Elaine Grace', enclosed in a light blue rectangular box.

Elaine Grace

UNISA Student No: 4623010

## ADDENDUM D: ETHICAL CLEARANCE FROM ETHICS COMMITTEE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA (Original application)



### UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2017/10/18

Ref: **2017/10/18/4623010/32/MC**

Name: Mrs EL Grace

Student: 4623010

Dear Mrs Grace

**Decision:** Ethics Approval from  
2017/10/18 to 2022/10/18

#### Researcher:

Name: Mrs EL Grace

Email: elainelydia@gmail.com

Telephone: +27 82 258 1598

#### Supervisor:

Name: Prof S Krog

Email: krogss@unisa.ac.za

Telephone: +27 12 429 4461

#### Title of research:

**Lecturers' perceptions on the value of the experience of completing a teaching portfolio**

**Qualification:** M Ed in Psychology of Education

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2017/10/18 to 2022/10/18.

*The **low/medium/high risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2017/10/18 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:



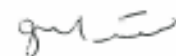
University of South Africa  
Pretorius Street, Medunsa Ridge, City of Tshwane  
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
[www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date 2022/10/18. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

*Note:*

*The reference number 2017/10/18/4623010/32/MC should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



**Prof A Motlhabane**  
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC  
mcdtc@netactive.co.za



**Prof V McKay**  
EXECUTIVE DEAN

Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

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#### CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED IN RELATION TO RESEARCH

Permission is granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted.

**Please note:** The panel has not considered the merits, accuracy or ethical soundness of the research. The only merits examined are the use of The IIE as a sample. Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. A copy of the final paper must be submitted electronically to The IIE's Research and Development Manager at [research@iie.ac.za](mailto:research@iie.ac.za) no later than 30 days post finalisation.
2. The researcher(s) is not permitted to refer to The IIE's brands or use The IIE's brand name, logo, brand or any other identifiers in any way including in questionnaires, surveys, interviews, proposal, research reports, etc. The IIE's brand needs to be referred to in a generic manner, for example 'An HE provider; ... an educational brand of an HE provider; ... etc.'
3. The researcher(s) will need to obtain informed consent in writing from all of the participants in his/ her sample if the study is not anonymous.
4. If the Learning Management System (LMS) of The IIE is used, the researcher(s) is not permitted to refer to Learn by name. Learn needs to be referred to in a generic manner such as the 'Learning Management System of a Higher Education provider.'
5. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the relevant person(s) at the brand or The IIE Central Academic Team that would be involved in the study.
6. Research may only be conducted in such a way that the normal programme of the site/ offices is not interrupted.
7. The principal/ manager of a site must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher(s) may carry out the research at the site.
8. The researcher(s) may only use this data for research purposes and in no other way.
9. Should the researcher(s) wish to publish this research or in any way make the results public, such as publishing the results on social media etc., this committee will need to approve the request first.
10. Photographs of human subjects may only be taken if relevant to the research and informed consent was obtained and even with informed consent the photographs may not be published on any platforms.
11. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/ her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, taxis and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/ or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
12. No names or identifying information of participants may be used within the research and the research must be voluntary.
13. If any of The IIE reports are used as part of the research, identifying information needs to be removed.

[Redacted] Pty Ltd, its associated companies, employees, contractors, representatives and directors, are indemnified against all claims which may arise in connection with or as a result of any loss, damage or injury to you as a researcher entering into an agreement with a participant in the course of your research, provided that such loss, damage or injury is caused by the gross negligence or intentional act(s) or omission(s) of [Redacted] Pty Ltd, its associated companies, employees, contractors, representatives and directors.

Wishing you the very best of luck.

Yours sincerely,



[Redacted signature block]

*E. Grace*  
15 Jan 2018

## ADDENDUM F: INFORMATION BRIEF FOR PARTICIPANTS



Dear .....

My name is Elaine Grace and I am doing research under Professor Krog's supervision, of the College of Education, at UNISA. The title of my research is: "Lecturers' perceptions on the value of the experience of completing a teaching portfolio".

This study forms part of the completion of a Master's degree in Psychology of Education. In my research study my objectives are to:

- Explore some lecturers' perceptions as to the perceived value of doing a teaching portfolio by investigating the impact on their professional growth.
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- Determine whether some lecturers have evidence that completing a teaching portfolio has a positive result on students' achievement.
- Determine whether some lecturers perceive there to be sufficient value in doing a teaching portfolio for them to use it as a lifelong strategy for their growth and development.

### WHY ARE YOU BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

I request that you consider taking part voluntary in this study, which will take place under my supervision. The purposive sample group for this study must comprise of qualified and experienced lecturers who have completed a teaching portfolio.

### WHAT IS THE NATURE OF YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The study comprises of a face-to-face semi-structured interview, which contains a set of twelve guiding questions. These questions are designed to provide information to answer the research question and you are required to respond to them during the interview.

The data collection will be qualitative, so your subjective values, personal opinions, personal experiences and reflections are valued in this process. There are no right and wrong answers. Any follow-up questions will be done individually in order to clarify the researcher's understanding. The sample is random and purposive: you were selected on the basis that you have previously completed a teaching portfolio, therefore you are able to use this experience in your answers.

#### **CAN YOU WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?**

Participating in this study is voluntary; you are under no obligation to consent to participate. If you do decide to take part, then you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. However, you are free to withdraw from this process at any time and without giving a reason.

#### **ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?**

You should not experience any inconvenience or discomfort during this study. Responses are optional, treated as confidential and recorded anonymously. Mr XXXX, College Principal, Ms XXXXXX, Senior Deputy Principal – Academics and Mrs XXXXX – Academic Operations Co-ordinator have all been informed about this study and have given their approval for me to conduct the interviews.

#### **WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?**

Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one, apart from the researcher and her supervisor, will know about your involvement in this study. In addition, no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give, because they will be coded by number. Your answers will be referred to by a code in the data as well as in any publications or presentations at conference proceedings.

A report of the study may be submitted for publication in a research report and/or journal articles, but individual participants will not be identified in any report.

#### **HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?**

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a personal laptop that is protected by a password. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. After this period, the hard copies will be shredded and the electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through the use of a software program.

#### **WILL YOU RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?**

You will not receive any payment or other incentives for your participation in this study.

#### **HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?**

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you wish to have one.

#### **HOW WILL YOU BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?**

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, then please contact Elaine Grace at email: elainelydia@gmail.com or cell: 082 258 1598. The findings will be accessible for 5 years.

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact me by using the above email or cell phone. If you have any concerns about the way in which the research was conducted, then please contact Professor Krog at email: krog@unisa.ac.za or office number: 012 429 4461.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and for considering my request to participate in this study.

Elaine Grace

UNISA Student No: 4623010



## ADDENDUM G: PARTICIPANT'S CONSENT FORM



Dear Participant

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to interview you and to use your personal views in this research study. The signing and returning of this participant's consent form before an interview is a prerequisite of this research: please return this form to elainelydia@gmail.com at least 48 hours before the scheduled interview date.

I, ..... (participant's name and surname), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in the research on "Lecturers' perceptions on the value of the experience of completing a teaching portfolio" has provided me with the relevant information. I have been informed about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconveniences regarding my participation.

I have read (or as the researcher had explained to me) and understood the study as described in the information sheet.

I am aware that my answers during a face-to-face interview will be digitally recorded to ensure an accurate record of my responses. Furthermore, these recordings will be transcribed to form a written record. I am mindful of the fact that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications that will follow from this research, on the understanding that these quotations will be anonymous. In addition, I am also aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but my participation will be kept confidential and anonymous, unless otherwise specified and discussed with me prior to any publication or presentation.

I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions and to add any additional details that I have chosen to discuss. The researcher informed me that I might withdraw my consent at any time without penalty, by simply advising her. With full knowledge of all proceedings, I agree, of my free will, to participate in this study.

Participant's name (Please print): .....

Participant's contact details: Cell number: .....

Email address: .....

Date: .....

Participant's signature: .....

Researcher's name (Please print): Elaine Grace

Researcher's contact details: Cell no: 082 258 1598.

Email address: elainelydia@gmail.com

Date: .....

Researchers' signature: .....

## H: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE



### **TITLE : Lecturers' perceptions on the value of the experience of completing a teaching portfolio**

Please answer the following questions to record your personal opinions relating to your individual experience concerning the completion of your teaching portfolio. The information recorded will remain confidential and be used only for this study. The capturing and processing of the data will be done anonymously.

#### **General information**

What is your highest qualification?

The total approximate number of years of teaching and lecturing experience?

The approximate number of times that you have completed a teaching portfolio?

#### **Impact on completing a teaching portfolio on your behaviour and thinking process:**

##### **Impact on behaviour and thinking process:**

- How do you think the process of completing a teaching portfolio impacts on your behaviour in the classroom?
- In what way do you think this process impacts on your thinking as you plan and execute your lessons?
- How has a teaching portfolio changed your teaching/lecturing across the years?
- Can you explain what role you believe reflection plays in the completing of your teaching portfolio and development plan?
- What role does reflection play in gaining understanding and knowledge of your teaching?
- How does reflection impact on your teaching skills?

##### **Self-directed growth**

- In what way do you think that reflection and growth are part of your teaching strategies?
- In what way do you believe that completing a teaching portfolio and development plan has been integrated into your self-directed career growth plan?

##### **Lifelong tools for a personalised learning space**

- Motivate why you believe that you would or would not use the strategy of a teaching portfolio for a self-directed, personalised growth plan:
  - Across the rest of your career
  - Even if you are not required to do so by your employer
  - To document and plan your personalised learning space

**Observations and evidence**

- Can you mention any evidence or observations that you have noticed that confirms that by doing a teaching portfolio and development plan your efforts has had an impact on the students' thinking, behaviour, attitude and results?

**Comments/ suggestions**

- Do you have any comments/suggestions regarding your current teaching portfolio?

Thank you for your assistance with this study. I appreciate your input, opinions and accounts of your experience!

## ADDENDUM I: FIELD NOTES: CONTENTS OF A TEACHING PORTFOLIO

(Criteria-referenced assessment of quality of teaching service delivery, version 8, 2015)

TEACHING PORTFOLIO CATEGORIES AND SOURCES WITHIN EACH FOR SUMMATIVE PURPOSES	T&L initiatives and practice that should exist at the highest level
Teaching Philosophy or Educational Credo	Own stated Teaching Philosophy or Educational Credo is required.
Description of Contracted Teaching Responsibilities, Obligations and Value-added (All 6 criteria to be included in TP). This could be summarised in a few pages with actual sample selection of evidence under Artifacts	<p>0 = Not observed/Not evidenced</p> <p>1 = Ineffective/Very weak/Far below expectations/Major improvements needed</p> <p>2 = Slightly effective/Below expectations/Significant improvements needed</p> <p>3 = Moderately effective/Average/Some improvements needed</p> <p>4 = Very effective/Really good/Above expectations/Few improvements needed</p> <p>5 = Extremely effective/Exceptional/Far above expectations</p>
Innovative and Effective Teaching Strategies	A basic description of two or three techniques you use based on your credo. This could include <u>active and collaborative learning activities</u> used effectively in the classroom to better meet the needs of diverse student learning styles; evidence of active teaching and learning through small group/pair discussions; activities that require all students to interact or participate; evidence of other <u>effective teaching strategies</u> such as Assessment AS Learning (ADL); visuals for association or discussion stimuli; effective questioning techniques and debating techniques to develop critical thinking; Applied Learning techniques; case studies; project-based learning; applied learning techniques relevant for SLPs and the working adult; teaching techniques specific to a particular subject domain - all to enhance learning through impactful teaching.
Innovation in T&L using Educational Technology	Any innovation that you have designed and implemented to enhance your teaching and students' learning using technology. This could include a successful blended learning experience for students in class, and new innovative teaching strategies such as interactive use of wireless or Web 2.0 technologies in the classroom. This may also include innovative collaborative techniques using technology, new virtual learning spaces, and of course effective use of any one or more Web 2.0 technologies to support a particular learning outcome. Evidence of enhancing student learning through use of technologies in and outside the classroom; new learning spaces such as wikis/websites/blogs/social media to connect you to your students outside the classroom; evidence of how you use technology to enhance your own development and keep abreast of current trends in HE teaching of your subject; electronic marking with constructive written feedback, etc.

Material Development	Development of 'own' supplementary teaching materials and learning materials of value to students. This may include learning activities/exercises, additional notes you have prepared for students, podcasts or other digital content, PowerPoint presentations, worksheets, formative mini tests/writing exercises etc. This section also includes contracted development of module manuals, 'power packs' or assessments for any programme that the institution offers. Developer, examiner and moderator roles also considered here.
Integrated Student Supports	This includes development of academic, language and quantitative literacy and other supports for students that a lecturer integrates into class activities and contextualises within the subject being taught <i>These supports are far more effective than stand-alone</i> and add-on extras offered outside the timetable. Any evidence of integrated supports such as writing skills, paraphrasing, in-text referencing, addressing plagiarism through correct referencing, study methods, time management and the like are applicable here. This section may also include one-on-one consultations for students and/or small group student support outside usual class group teaching sessions; student tracking follow-up and support; small group tutorials, boosters, exam revision workshop sessions and WIL. All contracted additional supports and mentorship to students either one-on-one or in small groups, and any supports outside usual class time given freely to students as value-add can be included here too.
Marking as Teaching	Judicious and constructive written feedback to students on marked assignments or class written activity that serves to help students improve; using marked exercises to teach by highlighting a particular understanding or style of writing or concept; designing class activities that require students to write (short write) and get marked in class either by self or another student and then teaching based on this marking. This could include informal ADL initiatives that are marked and used to teach viz. assessment as learning. Thus any learning activity which has been marked with constructive feedback that is used to teach the student.
Value-add to T & L	<p>Industry achievements or networks or experiences that bring value-add to student learning experience and encourage application of learning to real world of work - this could be through a guest lecturer, your role as Programme Champion or your own industry experience/networks. Alternatively, relevant and meaningful contextualisation that brings value-add to students' understanding of theoretical/abstract concepts. Evidence of the value-add to students is needed here. This may include industry enrichment activities such as LAW evenings, Moot Court, Internship, etc. or evidence of how theoretical/abstract concepts are made concrete and meaningful to students. This could also include value-add to peers if you represent them on campus committees/forums such as Lecturer Forum.</p> <p>Community of teaching practice such as mentoring a peer; reviewing teaching of a peer; sharing best practice with teaching colleagues; contribution to a community of teaching practice; collaboration with peers; facilitating or presenting at a campus developmental workshop; Subject Head/Module Leader role in which lecturers teaching same module are sharing subject-specific didactics; contribution to</p>

	<p>discussions on teaching; sharing best teaching practice and empowering other lecturers to excel in T&amp;L.</p> <p>Professional development such as attendance at campus teaching skills developmental workshop, XXX Faculty Day, external developmental workshop/seminar, attendance at academic/T&amp;L conference, attendance at XXX Celebration of T&amp;L, marking for external provider, evidence of keeping abreast in your own discipline through the development of your own Personal Learning Environment (PLE) or in developments in T&amp;L internationally or locally. It may include annual certification in professional courses, completion of higher studies to improve your academic or teaching qualifications or other capacity-building development initiatives. Attendance at XXX SLPs for lecturers, such as Research or Best Teaching Practice. This section may also include evidence of industry involvement and the deepening of industry knowledge through interventions/material/programmes attended/presented/developed or conducted and done with clients other than XXX.</p> <p>Scholarship of teaching in the name of XXXXX – writing short article for campus T&amp;L newsletter; presentation of a paper at annual Celebration of T&amp;L; written work accepted for promoting novice research into teaching and academic writing; published research paper or article in an accredited Journal or the XXX Journal. Presentation of a paper at a national/international conference; publications/presentations in industry that reflect professional development that is discipline-specific. Achievement of a teaching award.</p>
Reflective Analysis (Both areas of reflection to be included in TP)	
Reflective Teaching Practice and Reflection on Improving Your Student Success Rates	<p>Reflection on how you are growing and developing your craft that links all of the above together.</p> <p>Own teaching development plan that clearly evidences your own reflective teaching practice with a view to improvement. Evidence of own responsiveness to students' learning needs; evidence of SET and/or adaptations of SET in which student feedback to you on your teaching is used by yourself to evidence development in your teaching. Evidence of reflection on ADC/peer reviews of your teaching skills; improvement from one review to next; requesting ADC or peer to come into class to conduct review on specific initiatives you have targeted for development; appropriate evidence of self-reflection following the review but before the feedback session; evidence of self-reflection after the feedback session; creation of tangible, realistic development plan in response to feedback following peer review.</p> <p>Evidence that you take some accountability for your student success rates, track your own individual pass rates, compare to previous years and other campuses to reflect on improvements required or made. Own reflection of this measure of your teaching. Evidence of significant improvements in pass rates or pass rates above your own norm, or campus norm, the national norm or top national module pass rate. Identify students at risk in your subject and flag this with Student</p>

	<p>Support but also respond with own integrated or add-on supports. Reflection on the learning styles/needs of your students and how your teaching skills, study techniques, exam preparation, etc. assist students to achieve learning outcomes as reflected in results analyses, reduced module dropout rates, average class mark and/or distinction rate. This criterion needs to evidence your OWN reflection on your student success rates and what you have done/are doing to improve them.</p>
Artifacts (appendices – evidence to support above claims)	<p>Your selected sample of evidence should promote your contribution to improved T&amp;L and the quality of your teaching service delivery. It should show that you do what you say you do. It could include student work samples with marking and constructive feedback, an innovative learning activity you have designed and effectively used, a completed peer review, feedback from students that you have used to improve your teaching, student and peer ratings where applicable, a paper you have presented, a few visuals you have used in class, formative assessments or short writes you have used to effectively achieve a particular learning outcome, sample hand-out that student found useful, etc. Each source provides further suggestions from which you select an appropriate sample to evidence the effectiveness and quality of your teaching service delivery as you have claimed.</p>

## ADDENDUM J: DETAIL OF THEMES TABULATED

Table J displays a more detailed tabulated version of the data collected from this research during the semi-structured interviews. This table contains a summary of all the details contained in Table 4.2. It also contains references to the literature as well as to the lecturers' utterances. The discussion of these themes is contained in section 4.6.

The interviews with the lecturers provided seven themes, and three were most helpful in determining the value of a teaching portfolio (Themes 1, 2 & 5). These themes provided valuable insights into the lecturers' perception of the value of a teaching portfolio. They helped to formulate the answers to the four research questions, in conjunction with the findings in the literature. The remaining themes were informative, because they provided further understanding, guidelines and suggestions regarding the doing of a teaching portfolio.

**Table J: Detailed tabulated findings with regards the emergent themes on the value of a teaching portfolio as perceived by the lecturers.**

Main Themes and Subthemes	Summary of Findings
<b>THEME 1: VALUE OF A TEACHING PORTFOLIO: Growth, development and competence</b> (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.6.1) 5 of the 8 lecturers recognised growth and development as a benefit	It was evident from the interviews with lecturers and literature that a teaching portfolio instigates positive change and growth, as it causes the lecturers to take stock. It documents and records their knowledge and skills, as well as their plans to develop their competence for their careers and at a personal level. (cf. section 4.6.1).
<b>Knowledge</b> (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.6.1.1) 7 of the 8 lecturers recognised the impact of knowledge development after they had completed portfolio	A teaching portfolio allows a lecturer to demonstrate their knowledge and skill (Frunzeanu, 2014:117) (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2). It keeps your teaching relevant, validates what you do, deepens your understanding and is constructed and reconstructed (Kecik et al.: 2012:175). Lecturers reveal in the interviews that a teaching portfolio has a huge impact on knowledge acquisition in pedagogy, strategies, skills, content, problem solving and metacognition (cf. section: 4.6.1.1). This provides evidence of both knowledge and skills development and growth.
<b>Skill</b> (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.6.1.2) 7 of the 8 lecturers perceived this as a valuable benefit	Knowledge converts to skills, identifies areas of improvement, adds value to teaching and moves an educator towards excellence (Shulman, 1978:9-15) (cf. Chapter 1, section 1.2.2). Lecturers acknowledged that knowledge and skills are interrelated. A teaching portfolio consolidates and allows for planning, influencing execution in the class on a daily basis. It allows lecturers to look for innovative, new approaches and identify strategies that work (cf. section 4.6.1.2). This will create an ongoing improvement in lecturing and possibly moving the lecturers towards excellence.



<p><b>Planning and decision making</b> (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.6.1.3) 4 of the 8 lecturers perceived this as a valuable skill, which was the result of doing a teaching portfolio.</p>	<p>The literature indicates that a teaching portfolio is therefore a planned process which has to be systematically learned across time and is a powerful tool. (Meeus et al. 2009:408) (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.2). Lecturers agreed that a teaching portfolio has a positive impact on: planning; decision making; deeper thinking, so it was intentional. The success is evident in the class results and in the students' learning which is goal-orientated and structured (cf. section 4.6.1.3).</p>
<p><b>Changes in lecturing</b> (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.6.1.4) 7 of the 8 lecturers perceived this as a result.</p>	<p>For the lecturers, the point of this process [completing a teaching portfolio] will be in the learning, not the teaching (Meeus et al. 2009: 405-407) (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2). Lecturers stipulated that as a teaching portfolio required them to document their teaching philosophy, this required deep-thinking and reflection of their lecturing. It had an impact on and caused them to adapt and change the delivery of their lectures. The process is dynamic and allowed for continuous adaptations to accommodate different classes and students. This caused a growth in the lecturers' strengths and accommodated their weaknesses. This process instilled confidence and ensured the lecturers' competence and success (cf. section 4.6.1.4).</p>
<p><b>THEME 2: VALUE OF A TEACHING PORTFOLIO: Related to a higher-order lecturing skill and a deep-thinking ability</b> (cf Chapter 4, section 4.6.2)</p>	<p>Andragogy is about teaching adults, it is the practice, method and techniques used to move one towards independence and self-direction in acquiring learning (Pappas, 2013:n.p.) (cf. Chapter 1, section 1.1). Andragogy will encompass strategising and planning one's own learning and thinking on a deep and meaningful level to ensure growth. The lecturers identified 6 deep-thinking and lecturing skills that they confirmed developed as a result of doing a teaching portfolio (cf. section 4.6.2). These lecturing and thinking skills are reflection, self-actualisation, self-confidence, self-concept, self-image, metacognition, insight, intuition and maximising their potential.</p>
<p><b>Reflection</b> (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.6.2.1) This is the primary benefit of doing a teaching portfolio, and all of the lecturers agreed with this finding lecturers acknowledge this.</p>	<p>Weber (2014:83) claims that reflection is central to learning. Lecturers engage in this reflection and it is a crucial ingredient for both learning and change (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.2). Lecturers reported that they agree that reflection is a benefit of doing a teaching portfolio, because it creates a space and teaches you deep reflection; makes conscious what you have achieved; validates your decisions; recognises your strengths and weaknesses; highlights the changes which must be implemented; it is ongoing and detailed and it causes growth and development (cf. section 4.6.2.1).</p>

<p><b>Self-actualisation</b> (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.6.2.2) 5 of the 8 lecturers reported this as a benefit.</p>	<p>Self-actualisation is the prime objective of adult learning (Pappas, 2013:n.p.). Maslow sees self-actualisation as the highest human need and one desired for maximum potential and growth (McLeod, 2017) (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.1). Self-actualisation is seen to be a benefit of doing a teaching portfolio by some of the lecturers, for the following reasons: It creates connections, through reflection; it allows one to strategise; achieve growth; it validates lecturing; it deepens understanding of the lecturing role; it achieves career goals, even financial ones; it allows self-actualisation; it validates the delivery of quality lecturing (cf. section 4.6.2.2).</p>
<p><b>Self-confidence, self-concept, self-image</b> (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.6.2.3) Positive impact was reported by 5 of the 8 lecturers.</p>	<p>Success in learning comes from being empowered, which provides confidence (Gharial et al. 2017:269) (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.6). Lecturers agreed with this and reported that they believed that a teaching portfolio served to bolster their confidence, especially the doing of the first portfolio. The following built confidence, self-concept and self-image: the experience of the journey travelled while doing a portfolio; resulting in personal and professional growth (cf. section 4.6.2.3).</p>
<p><b>Metacognition</b> (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.6.2.4) 2 of the 8 lecturers acknowledged a metacognitive value to a teaching portfolio.</p>	
<p><b>Insightful</b> (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.6.2.5) 7 of the 8 lecturers consider the doing of a teaching portfolio to be an insightful process.</p>	<p>It is evident to GroiBbock, (2012:42) that insight, particularly about oneself and one's learning ... all impacts on a personal, individualised level and intentionally drives growth (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2.4). Lecturers agree with this and believe a well-structured teaching portfolio that is developmentally orientated, allows you to: learn; structure your thoughts, improve your skill; grow you as a person; builds confidence in your intuition; build you self-confidence and image; validate the decisions you make about your lecturing; have insight that is positive and upbuilding; goal set; identify your strengths and weaknesses; identify new areas about yourself; and identify areas for improvement.. The benefits and insights gained are especially significant the first time you do a teaching portfolio as well as at the end of the year, when it helps to consolidate lecturers' experiences (cf. section 4.6.2.5).</p>

<p><b>Intuition</b> Perceived growth in an intuitive way was reported by only 1 of the 8 lecturers (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.6.2.6)</p>	<p>Tacit knowledge is knowledge understood or meant without being stated (Waite, 2012: 742) (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.4). It is the wisdom of intuition, a tacit feeling that allows for effective intuitive decision making. One lecturer confirms that a teaching portfolio develops intuition, because it indicates deep metacognitive value, which is related to developing confidence. It allows for the ability to read the class, to trust a gut feel, to get a sense as to what will or will not work for a specific class, and it validates intuitive decisions - all by requiring one to search for the evidence of success (cf. section 4.6.2.6). Honing these skills is valuable, as it helps to advance knowledge, as well as developing skills in lecturing.</p>
<p><b>Maximising potential</b> (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.6.2.7) 4 of the 8 lecturers experience a teaching portfolio have been beneficial in this way.</p>	<p>De Vos et al. (2014:310) state that reality is constructed personally and subjectively by that person (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.5). To pursue your own best potential ... one must take on tasks that cause one to grow and stretch and pushes one to a full effort (Maxwell, 2015:1 (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.9). Lecturers confirm that a teaching portfolio develops your personal growth, strengthens teaching, makes the lecturer more aware and it allows one to understand what you can and cannot do well. The detailed documentation specifies the benefits that will assist in helping the lecturers to maximise their potential: it gives them something concrete and makes the lecturers more aware of their teaching. It is a self-directed tool and so is dependent on the lecturers to create the motivation and space to make a portfolio work for them. This requires that they consult regularly, re-evaluate progress, plan, make decisions, set goals and develop strategies. This ongoing process maximises potential continually in a personal way (cf. section 4.6.2.7). (Maxwell, 2015:1 (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.9).</p>
<p><b>THEME 3: FACTORS AFFECTING VALUE OF A TEACHING PORTFOLIO</b> (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.6.3)</p>	<p>Campbell et al. (2014:3) see it as a carefully selected version of documents portraying individuality, autonomy, professional growth and competence within one's teaching (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2). According to the lecturers, a teaching portfolio instigates positive growth, change and improvement by helping them to take stock and by documenting the process. This creates an awareness of knowledge and skills which highlights valuable growth and development of competent lecturing skills (cf. section 4.6.3).</p>

<p><b>Regularity of updating a teaching portfolio</b> (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.6.3.1) 4 of the 8 lecturers considered this to be important</p>	<p>According to Pappas (2013:n.p.) the lecturer implements learning strategies and then evaluates the outcomes, sets goals, paces and manages it all. Timing is therefore individual and personalised and done when the lecturer chooses (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2.3). This varied according to the lecturers and is probably linked to their respective values and goals..</p> <p>The timing could be ongoing, it could be annually, but it must be lifelong if it is to be developmental. It must be continuous if it is to track changes (cf. section 4.6.3.1). Both the literature as well as the lecturers emphasise the strategised growth and development.</p>
<p><b>Optional lifetime development tool</b> (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.6.3.2) 1 of the 8 lecturers reported that they would use a teaching portfolio if not required to do so.</p>	<p>Lecturers agree that a portfolio is only done because it is a requirement by the institution and not by choice. Despite some of the lecturers acknowledging its value, it is not considered a voluntarily option, because one would never willingly sit down to do a teaching portfolio. This is mainly due to the demand of the task on time and effort. The fact that these lecturers were ICs, paid on an hourly rate, also had an impact on the fact that they considered themselves to have received little return for their effort (cf. section 4.6.3.2). This is contrary to what the literature records, as it only emphasises the positive aspects of a teaching portfolio.</p>
<p><b>Teaching portfolio as a personal plan</b> (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.6.3.3) 2 of the 8 lecturers said they would use a teaching portfolio as a personal development plan.</p>	<p>Meeus et al. (2009:409) considers the drawing up a personal plan as a key element of learning competency, as this monitors development and progress (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2.3). For most of the lecturers, portfolios as personal plans did not prove to be popular. Most lecturers did a portfolio, because they had to secure a position as an independent contractor. However, those lecturers who supported a portfolio being a personal plan, it reinforced what the findings in the literature revealed, because they were constantly aware of looking for evidence and considered it an essential and valuable tool that they would use for the rest of their careers (cf. section 4.6.3.3).</p>
<p><b>Self-directed growth</b> (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.6.3.4) 4 of the 8 lecturers believed that they personally directed their growth as a result of doing a teaching portfolio.</p>	<p>It is in the lecturer's own capacity to execute self-regulated learning: the teaching portfolio could assist by highlighting planning, reflective capacity and teaching strengths and weaknesses (Meeus et al. 2009: 405-407) (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2). Half of the lecturers believed that they personally directed their growth as a result of doing a teaching portfolio, so this was supportive of the findings in the literature. This growth occurs when the teaching portfolio is linked to a development plan, because it causes reflection; critique; metacognition; goal setting; evaluation and growth. It has the most meaning when personal</p>

	<p>feedback is supplied (cf. section 4.6.3.4). The experience of this value was therefore dependent on how the process of doing a portfolio was implemented.</p>
<p><b>THEME 4: FACTORS RESULTING IN REDUCED VALUE</b> (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.6.4) 7 of the 8 lecturers reported negative concerns resulting from doing a teaching portfolio.</p>	<p>Most lecturers experienced episodes which impacted negatively with regards to the doing of a teaching portfolio. Some are personal, some related to the institution and some regarding the implementation of the process.</p> <p>Herewith a synopsis: Being compelled to do a teaching portfolio to get a contract is not ideal. It is seen as an administrative task, a list or a record of what you have already done, and it is seen as a glorified CV. It is time consuming to complete and there is no valid gain or value to the lecturer. Instead, it must be part of a developmental plan to be valuable. It is compulsory and so the reflective space is not embraced or genuine and the process is therefore not considered insightful. If done annually, then it cannot accommodate the changes that happen on a daily basis. A teaching portfolio may work better for a full-time employee building a career in one organisation. To improve value, the nature of the implementation must be developmental, guidance and support must be offered by a facilitator who is a peer and is more knowledgeable and experienced (cf. section 4.6.4).</p>
<p><b>THEME 5: IMPACT/EVIDENCE OF THE BENEFIT ON THE STUDENTS' RESULTS</b> (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.6.5). 4 of the 8 lecturers reported evidence to support this finding.</p>	<p>Dajani (2014:64) believes that the portfolio is a means to an end of improved student achievement, which is seen as an ongoing process of development (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2). Half of the lecturers reported that they too had evidence of the impact on the students' learning, and could provide evidence of their developmental processes on the students. The lecturers' growth results in and directly impacts on their students' growth. Evidence available was in the form of assessments and pass rates which are quantitative measures, and qualitative measures like student motivation, behaviour and emotional growth were reported (cf. section 4.6.5.1).</p>
<p><b>THEME 6: LECTURERS' IMPORTANT POINTS CONCERNING A TEACHING PORTFOLIO</b> (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.6.6)</p>	<p>Teaching portfolios are useful to showcase a lecturer's knowledge and skills at the time of a promotion, it helps an employee to show the quality of the services offered. The first teaching portfolios lecturers did was overwhelming and they needed good training. These portfolios are the most valuable ones, because they bolster self-confidence, motivation and enrich the outcomes of learning. It is essential that a teaching portfolio be linked to a face-to-face discussion with a mentor who must have superior knowledge and skills.</p> <p>The mentors need to offer valuable and respected</p>

	guidance and support, which causes growth for the mentee (cf. section 4.6.6).
<b>THEME 7: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE VALUE FOR COMPLETING A TEACHING PORTFOLIO</b> (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.6.7)	<p>The greatest reward is the projected value of doing of a teaching portfolio in the years to come (Ravitech, 2014:n.p.) (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2.2). It is essential that a lecturer doing the portfolio needs to perceive it as valuable. This means that it needs to consist of tasks that cause growth and development. Motivation for doing a portfolio impacts on its value. Suggestions were made about the need for more discussion, for example, an interview, discussion groups and workshops. There was a need for events to challenge a lecturer's skillset in specific areas that cause growth (cf. section 4.6.7.1).</p> <p>The implementation style of a teaching portfolio is important, because a teaching portfolio is most valuable the first time you do it, especially as it helps to clarify your teaching philosophy. It also records and sums-up your achievements, but it must be done as a two-way part of a developmental process, where the emphasis is on feedback for growth. A teaching portfolio must be a continuous assessment that measures performance, but it must not be linked to an increase in payment rate, the awarding of a contract or be obligatory</p>

## ADDENDUM K: DETAILED COMPARISON OF THE FINDINGS IN THE LITERATURE AND THE LECTURERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE TASK-BASED SKILLSET DEVELOPED BY DOING A TEACHING PORTFOLIO

**Table K: Detailed comparison of the findings in the literature and the lecturers' perceptions of the task-based skillset developed by doing a teaching portfolio (Comprehensive detailed version of Table 4.3 with references)**

<b>Task-based skill Findings in the literature</b>	<b>Task-based skill Lecturers' Perceptions</b>
Reflection (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2 & 2.3.2)	Reflection (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.1 Reflection)
Critical review (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.2)	Not reported by lecturers
Structured thinking (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.2)	Structured thinking (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.1.1 Knowledge and Thinking)
Ordering Thinking (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.5.4 & 2.3.2)	Ordering Thinking (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.1.3 Planning)
Ability to strategise (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2 & 2.3)	Ability to strategise (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.1.3 Planning)
Document your thinking (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2)	Document your thinking (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.3 Planning)
Represent teaching performance (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2 & 2.3)	Represent teaching performance (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.1.3 Planning) (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.1.2 Skill)
Goal setting ability (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.6)	Goal setting ability (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.3 Planning)
Evaluate (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2 & 2.3)	Evaluate
Analysis of performance cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2)	Analysis of performance
Analyse strengths & weaknesses (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2)	Analyse strengths & weaknesses (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.1 Reflection)
Analysis of knowledge (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.2)	Analysis of knowledge (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.1.1 Knowledge and Thinking)
Analysis of skill (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3)	Analysis of skill (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.1.2 Skill)
Improves skill (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.2)	Improves skill (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.1.2 Skill)
Analysis of values and attitudes (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.1 & 2.5.4)	Not reported by lecturers
Analysis of attitudes (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.5.4)	Not reported by lecturers
Monitor (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2 & 2.3)	Not reported by lecturers
Creativity (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.6)	Not reported by lecturers
Make decisions (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.3)	Make decisions (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.1.3 Decision Making)
Plan to guide learners (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.6)	Not reported by lecturers
Plan learner interaction (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2.2)	Plan learner interaction (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.1.3 Planning)
Plan high student success (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.2.2 & 2.3.6)	Plan high student success (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.1.3 Planning)
Plan high student achievement (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2 & 2.3.6)	Plan high student achievement (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.1.3 Planning)
Develop student guidance (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.5.4. & 2.5.5)	Develop student guidance (4.6.5: Theme 5 – Subtheme: 4.6.5.1 Evidence in student learning)
Develop competent learners (cf. -Chapter 2, section 2.3.5 & 2.3.6)	Develop competent learners (4.6.5: Theme 5)
Plan learning environment (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.5.5 & 2.5.6)	Plan learning environment (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.1.3 Planning)

In Table K the comparison between the findings in the literature and lecturers' perceptions about the task-based skillset developed by doing a teaching portfolio are mostly the same, except that the lecturers do not identify critical review, values and attitudes, monitoring and creativity as benefits, while the literature did.



## ADDENDUM L: DETAILED COMPARISON OF THE FINDINGS IN THE LITERATURE AND LECTURERS' PERSONAL/PROFESSIONAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT

**Table L Detailed comparison of the findings in the literature and lecturers' personal/professional skill development (Comprehensive detailed version of Table 4.4 with references)**

<b>Personal/professional skill development <i>Findings in the literature</i></b>	<b>Personal/professional skill development <i>Lecturers' perceptions</i></b>
Andragogy (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.1)	Andragogy (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.2 Higher-order lecturing skills and deep- thinking ability)
Maximising potential (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3 & 2.3.9)	Maximising potential (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.7 Maximising your potential)
Independence (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.1)	Independence
Self-development (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.1)	Self-development (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.7 Maximising your potential) (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.2 Self-actualisation)
Self-direction (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.1)	Self-direction (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme 4.6.2.7 Maximising your potential) (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.2 Self-actualisation)
Self-assessment (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2 & 2.3.1)	Self-assessment (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme: Reflection) (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme 4.6.2.7: Maximising your potential) (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.2 Self-actualisation)
Intentional & informed actions (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.3)	Intentional & informed actions (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.1.3 Planning)
Active engagement (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2)	Active engagement
Planning (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2 & 2.3.2)	Planning (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.1.3 Planning)
Growth in teaching practice (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2)	Growth in teaching practice (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.1.2 Skill)
Growth in competence (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2, 2.3 & 2.4)	Growth in competence (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.1.2 Skill)
Growth in own academics (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.4)	Growth in own academics (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.1.2 Knowledge)
Fundamental planning of teaching and learning (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2 & 2.3)	Fundamental planning of teaching and learning (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.2 Planning)
Learn to constantly renew thinking (cf. Chapter 2, section, 2.3.3 & 2.3.5)	Learn to constantly renew thinking (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.1 Reflection, Subtheme 4.6.2.4 Metacognition, Subtheme 4.6.2.7 Maximise potential)
Ongoing change of perspective (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.4.2)	Ongoing change of perspective (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.1 Knowledge, 4.6.2.2 Skill, 4.6.1.3 Planning, 4.6.1.4 Changes in lecturing)
Fine-tuning of progress (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.6)	Fine-tuning of progress (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.1.3 Planning) (4.6.2 Theme 2 – Subtheme 4.6.2.1. Reflection)
Constructivist approach (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.5.4 & 2.2.3)	Constructivist approach (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.4 Metacognition)
Personal growth (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3 & 2.3.2.1)	Personal growth (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.1.1 Knowledge, Subtheme 4.6.1.2 Skill); (Theme 4.6.2 Subtheme 2 4.6.2.3 Self- confidence, self-concept, self-image)
Accountability for self (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2 & 2.5.2)	Accountability for self (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.3 Self- confidence, self-concept, self-image)



Accountability for learner	Accountability for learner (4.6.5 Theme 5)
Modelling of all of the above learning to learners (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.2 & 2.5.2)	Modelling of all of the above learning to learners (4.6.5: Theme 5)
Lifelong learner (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2 & 2.5.2)	Lifelong learner (4.6.3: Theme 3 – Subtheme: 4.6.3.6 Lifelong strategy)
Come-up alongside & support individual learners (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.5.2)	Come-up alongside & support individual learners (4.6.5: Theme 5)
Valid and worthy time management (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.6)	Valid and worthy time management (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme 4.6.1.3 Planning)

**Key for themes:**

Theme 1: Value related to growth, development and competence

Theme 2: Value related to higher-order lecturing skills and deep-thinking ability

Theme 5: Impact/evidence of the benefits on the learner's learning/results

In Table L the comparison appears to identify the very similar affordances in skills development discovered by researchers in the literature and reported on by lecturers.

## ADDENDUM M: DETAILED COMPARISON OF THE FINDINGS IN THE LITERATURE AND LECTURERS' PERCEPTION ON METACOGNITIVE/HIGHER-ORDER LECTURING SKILLS AND DEEP-THINKING ABILITY

**Table M: Detailed comparison of the findings in the literature and lecturers' perception on metacognitive/higher-order lecturing skills and deep-thinking ability (Comprehensive detailed version of Table 4.5 with references)**

Metacognitive/higher-order lecturing skill and deep-thinking ability development	Metacognitive/higher-order lecturing skill and deep-thinking ability development
<i>Findings in the literature</i>	<i>Lecturers' perceptions</i>
Self-actualisation (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.1)	Self-actualisation (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.2 Self-actualisation)
Fulfils the highest human need (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.1)	Fulfils the highest human need (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.2 Self-actualisation )
Move towards excellence (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.1)	Move towards excellence (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.2 Self-actualisation ) (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.7 Maximising potential)
Maximum potential (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2 , 2.3, 2.9)	Maximum potential (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.7 Maximising potential)
Deeper Insights (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.3 & 2.3.6)	Deeper Insights (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.5 Insight)
Insightful (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.3 & 2.3.6)	Insightful (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2. Insight)
Penetrates assumptions (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.3 & 2.5.2)	Not reported by lecturers
Penetrates values (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.2 & 2.5.2)	Not reported by lecturers
Penetrates beliefs (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.2 & 2.5.2)	Not reported by lecturers
Penetrates skills (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2 & 2.3.1)	Penetrates skills (4.6.2 1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.1.2 Skill)
Questions all past learning (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.5 & 2.5.4)	Questions all past learning (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.1 Reflection)
Internal conversation (cf. Chapter 2 , section 2.3.6)	Internal conversation (4.6.2:Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.4 Metacognition, 4.6.2.6 Intuition)
Builds wisdom (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.5.2)	Builds wisdom (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.1 Knowledge)
Encourages open-mindedness (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.2)	Encourages open-mindedness (4.6.1: Theme 1 – Subtheme: 4.6.1.1 Knowledge)
Develops tacit knowledge (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.4)	Develops tacit knowledge (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.6 Intuition)
Honing of intuition (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.4)	Honing of intuition (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.6 Intuition)
Creates an architectural role for thinking (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.5.2)	It was not clear that any lecturer reported this value

Table M shows a great similarity between the findings in the literature and the lecturers' perceptions, except that the lecturers did not report on values, beliefs and assumptions as benefits, neither did they refer to an architectural role for thinking.

## ADDENDUM N: DETAILED COMPARISON OF THE FINDINGS IN THE LITERATURE AND LECTURERS' PERCEPTIONS OF EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Table N: Detailed comparison between the findings in the literature and the lecturers' perception of emotional development (Comprehensive detailed version of Table 4.6 with references)**

Emotional Development <i>Findings in the literature</i>	Emotional Development <i>Lecturers' perceptions</i>
Builds Confidence (cf. Chapter2, section 2.3.6)	Builds Confidence (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.3 Self-concept, self-confidence, self-image)
Builds self-concept (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.1 & 2.3.6)	Builds self-concept (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.3 Self-concept, self-confidence, self-image)
Builds self-image (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.1 & 2.3.6)	Builds self-image (4.6.2: Theme 2 – Subtheme: 4.6.2.3 Self-concept, self-confidence, self-image)

The comparison in Table N finds a good match between the findings in the literature and the lecturers' perceptions about the emotional impact of doing a teaching portfolio.

## ADDENDUM O: DECLARATION LETTER FROM EDITOR



31 January 2019

To whom it may concern

I hereby certify that "lecturers' perceptions on the value of the experience of completing a teaching portfolio" has undergone an edit which focused on the candidate's use of language.

Yours faithfully

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature appears to be "R. J. Nussey" written in a cursive style.

Reville Nussey (Dr)

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## ADDENDUM P: DECLARATION LETTER FROM TECHNICAL EDITOR

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**Date:** 29th January 2019

### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, **Sharon Baxter**, hereby confirm that I have done the technical editing of the thesis: **LECTURERS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE VALUE OF THE EXPERIENCE OF COMPLETING A TEACHING PORTFOLIO** by **ELAINE LYDIA GRACE**, student number **4623010**, which she submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree **MASTER OF EDUCATION WITH SPECIALISATION IN PSYCHOLOGY OF EDUCATION** in the Department of Psychology of Education, Faculty of Education.

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